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Government  
Publications

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Second Session—Twenty-fourth Parliament

1959

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
**BROADCASTING**

*Chairman:* G. E. HALPENNY, Esq.

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MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AND EVIDENCE

No. 16

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TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 1959 (No Evidence Recorded)  
TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 1959

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CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

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WITNESSES:

Messrs. E. L. Bushnell, Acting President, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; Charles Jennings, Controller of Broadcasting; H. G. Walker, Director, Ontario and English Networks; F. W. Peers, *formerly* Supervisor of Talks and Public Affairs, Ontario and English Network Division; D. H. Gillis, *formerly* Assistant Supervisor of Talks and Public Affairs; and B. Trotter, *formerly* Supervising Producer, T.V. Public Affairs, Toronto, Ontario.

THE QUEEN'S PRINTER AND CONTROLLER OF STATIONERY  
OTTAWA, 1959



# SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BROADCASTING

*Chairman:* G. E. Halpenny, Esq.,

*Vice-Chairman:* J. Flynn, Esq.,  
and Messrs.

Miss Aitken,  
R. A. Bell (*Carleton*),  
Tom Bell (*Saint John-  
Albert*),  
Brassard (*Lapointe*),  
Mrs. Casselman,  
Chambers,  
Dorion,  
Eudes,  
Fairfield,  
Fisher,  
Forgie,

Fortin,  
Johnson,  
Kucherepa,  
Lambert,  
Macquarrie,  
Mitchell,  
Morris,  
Muir (*Lisgar*),  
McCleave,  
McGrath,  
McIntosh,  
McQuillan,

Nowlan,  
Paul,  
Pickersgill,  
Pratt,  
Richard (*Ottawa East*),  
Robichaud,  
Simpson,  
Smith (*Calgary South*),  
Smith (*Simcoe North*),  
Taylor,  
Tremblay.

J. E. O'Connor,  
*Clerk of the Committee.*



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## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY, June 23, 1959.

The Special Committee on Broadcasting met at 9.15 a.m. this day in front of the Peace Tower, and proceeded by bus to Uplands Airport.

At 10.00 a.m. the Committee left by air-transport for Malton, Ontario, from which it travelled by bus to the Jarvis Street Headquarters of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in downtown Toronto.

*Members present:* Mr. Bell (*Carleton*), Mr. Bell (*Saint John-Albert*), Mrs. Casselman, and Messrs. Chambers, Fairfield, Fisher, Halpenny, Kucherepa, Lambert, Macquarrie, Muir (*Lisgar*), McGrath, Paul, Smith (*Simcoe North*), Taylor—(15).

The Committee was greeted by senior officers of the Corporation and entertained at a buffet style luncheon on the Jarvis Street premises.

The Committee was divided into groups, and, together with members of the Board of Directors of the C.B.C. toured radio and television facilities in the Jarvis and Sumach Streets buildings.

The Committee viewed final rehearsals for a half-hour television drama; inspected studios and new equipment acquired by the C.B.C.; toured prop storage facilities, set design centres, art, costume and wardrobe departments.

Following completion of the tour members of the Committee were entertained at the Celebrity Club, and at 7.30 p.m. departed by bus for Malton, Ontario.

At approximately 10.00 p.m. the Committee arrived at Uplands Airport, and adjourned to meet again at 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday, June 24, 1959.

J. E. O'Connor,  
*Clerk of the Committee.*

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TUESDAY, June 30, 1959.

The Special Committee on Broadcasting met at 9.30 a.m. this day. The Chairman, Mr. Halpenny, presided.

*Members present:* Messrs. Bell (*Carleton*), Bell (*Saint John-Albert*), Brassard (*Lapointe*), Chambers, Eudes, Fisher, Flynn, Forgie, Halpenny, Lambert, Macquarrie, Mitchell, Morris, Muir (*Lisgar*), McGrath, McIntosh, McQuillan, Pickersgill, Paul, Richard (*Ottawa East*), Robichaud, Smith (*Calgary South*), Taylor and Tremblay—(24).

*In attendance:* Mr. F. W. Peers, formerly Supervisor of Talks and Public Affairs, Ontario and English Networks Division; Mr. D. H. Gillis, formerly Assistant Supervisor of Talks and Public Affairs; and Mr. B. Trotter, formerly Supervising Producer, T.V. Public Affairs, Toronto; all past employees of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.



The Chairman observed the presence of quorum and read to the Committee the motion adopted on Wednesday, June 24th relating to the calling of Messrs. Peers, Gillis and Trotter.

Messrs. Peers, Gillis and Trotter were introduced, and Mr. Peers reading from a prepared statement outlined his opinion and that of his colleagues concerning events related to the cancellation of the radio program "Preview Commentary". Mr. Peers, assisted by Mr. Gillis and Mr. Trotter, was questioned concerning the statement.

Mr. Morris moved, seconded by Mr. McIntosh,

*That* this Committee thank the witnesses, dismiss them, and return to consideration of the Committee's Agenda.

The motion was resolved in the negative, NAYS: 16; YEAS: 4.

At 10.55 a.m., Mr. Peers' questioning continuing, the Committee adjourned to meet again at 3.00 p.m. this day.

#### AFTERNOON SITTING

The Special Committee on Broadcasting reconvened at 3.00 p.m. this day. The Chairman, Mr. Halpenny, presided.

*Members present:* Messrs. Bell (Carleton), Bell (Saint John-Albert), Brassard (Lapointe), Chambers, Fisher, Flynn, Forgie, Fortin, Halpenny, Johnson, Lambert, Mitchell, Morris, Muir (Lisgar), McCleave, McGrath, McIntosh, McQuillan, Pickersgill, Paul, Robichaud, Smith (Calgary South), Taylor and Tremblay—(24).

*In attendance:* The same witnesses as at the morning sitting, with the addition of Mr. Ernest L. Bushnell, Acting President of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; and Mr. Charles Jennings, Controller of Broadcasting; and Mr. H. G. Walker, Director for Ontario and English Networks.

The questioning of Mr. Peers, assisted by Messrs. Gillis and Trotter was concluded and the witnesses retired.

Mr. Walker was called and presented his views concerning the events surrounding the cancellation of the radio program "Preview Commentary".

The Chairman being called from the room, Mr. Flynn, the Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

Mr. Walker was questioned and retired.

The Chairman, Mr. Halpenny, having returned, assumed the Chair.

Mr. Jennings was called, read a statement, was questioned and retired.

Mr. Bushnell was called, and reading from a prepared text, presented his views concerning the incident.

Mr. Bushnell's questioning completed, Mr. Chambers moved, seconded by Mr. McGrath,

*That* the Committee do now adjourn.

The motion having been agreed to at 4.45 p.m. the Committee adjourned to meet again at 9.30 a.m., Thursday, July 2, 1959.

J. E. O'Connor,  
Clerk of the Committee.



## EVIDENCE

TUESDAY, June 30, 1959.  
9:30 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the press cameramen please leave. Gentlemen, we have a quorum.

You will recall at the last meeting there was a motion made by Mr. Pickersgill, seconded by Mr. Forgie, which reads as follows:

Resolved that Mr. F. W. Peers, Mr. D. H. Gillis, Mr. B. Trotter and any other former members of the C.B.C. staff who resigned recently be invited by the steering committee to appear before the committee at the earliest possible time to give evidence concerning the charge "that clandestine political influence has been brought to bear on the C.B.C. management".

As you will recall, that motion passed with only one dissenting voice.

Then, Mr. O'Connor sent telegrams to Mr. Peers, Mr. Gillis and Mr. Trotter.

I might say to the committee and the witnesses that the acoustics in this room are about as bad as in any room in Canada. Therefore, we will all have to speak loudly.

The telegram reads as follows:

Following motion adopted this A.M. by special committee on broadcasting Stop That Mr. F. W. Peers, Mr. D. H. Gillis, Mr. B. Trotter and any former members of the C.B.C. staff who resigned recently be invited by the steering committee to appear before the committee at the earliest possible time to give evidence concerning the charges "That clandestine political influence has been brought to bear on the C.B.C. management" Stop Committee to meet Tuesday 9.30 A.M. June 30 Room 112N Parliament Buildings Stop Advise whether you will be present.

J. E. O'Connor  
Clerk of the Committee  
House of Commons

The three gentlemen on my right, Mr. F. W. Peers, Mr. D. H. Gillis and Mr. B. Trotter, are here with us this morning. I think before I call on the three witnesses, I would like to read this statement: I would suggest, ladies and gentlemen, that the sole purpose of this committee in calling these witnesses is to deal with the motion, that is, that there has been clandestine political interference. Therefore I intend to rule that all questions and answers which are not strictly to the motion be out of order. If this decision is not suitable to any member of this committee the Chair will be pleased to hear a motion to the contrary. Is that agreeable?

Agreed.

Mr. Peers, are you speaking for the trio to begin with?

Mr. F. W. PEERS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I am.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you any evidence to support your charges of clandestine political interference? If you have a statement it should be brief and strictly relative to the motion.



Mr. PEERS: Mr. Chairman, I have two things; I have a statement which is a recounting of the events which took place as I saw them, things which were said and things which led up to the time that my resignation was submitted. I believe that relates strictly to the central subject of the inquiry of this committee. It is my intention to be as helpful as I can be to this committee in determining the facts, and my statement has been drafted to that end. It is not argumentative and I think it is reasonably brief.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it strictly to the motion?

Mr. PEERS: I believe it is.

The CHAIRMAN: If it is not, I will have to rule you out of order.

Mr. PEERS: There is one point I would like to raise, and my colleagues can correct me if I am wrong. I believe the phrase which was used in the press interview from which the motion was taken—the phrase quoted in the motion—read, “clandestine political influence” rather than “interference”. This may have been reported in different ways in different newspapers; I am not sure.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you at any time correct that in the press?

Mr. PEERS: I am not certain I saw it in the press. What I am referring to is the statement which we handed to the press.

Mr. B. TROTTER: The statement we handed to the press did read “clandestine political influence”.

Mr. PEERS: I would like to read this statement which I have prepared. I believe there are sufficient copies for the members of the committee.

I should like to begin by explaining my responsibilities and those of my two colleagues. My position has been that of supervisor of talks and public affairs in the Ontario and English networks division. I have been responsible for the supervision of all public affairs programs on the English radio and television networks. My immediate superior is Mr. H. G. Walker, director for Ontario and English networks. He in turn is responsible to the president and vice-president. This means that my communication with C.B.C. management is ordinarily through Mr. Walker who speaks to us on their behalf.

Mr. Gillis has been assistant supervisor of talks and public affairs. Mr. Trotter has been supervising producer, T.V. Public Affairs, Toronto. He is in charge of all public affairs production originating in the main production centre for the English television network.

The following is a statement of the events leading to our resignations, in chronological sequence.

On Friday, June 12, through Mr. H. G. Walker's office, I received a message from Charles Jennings, controller of broadcasting, asking me to go to Ottawa for discussions with him the following Monday. The purpose of the discussions was to go over the information to be placed before the special committee on the subject of radio and television commentaries.

When I arrived at Mr. Jennings' office at 10:00 a.m. Monday, June 15, he handed me a sheet of paper which announced the replacement of the program “Preview Commentary” by a news report on parliamentary developments each day, the change to take place on the next Monday, June 22.

The text of Mr. Jennings' statement appears as Exhibit A. I think perhaps I should read that. It is the second last page in this statement. The statement is dated June 15, 1959.



## APPENDIX A

(Statement handed by Charles Jennings to Frank Peers Monday, June 15, 1959).

*Parliamentary Reports and Commentaries*

In "Preview Commentary" which follows the morning news bulletins at 8:10 a.m. Monday to Friday, the experiment has been made of using a variety of press gallery correspondents to give a daily interpretative review of the previous day's happenings in parliament. In these commentaries, the parliamentary debates and statements by government or opposition speakers are assessed in terms of the personal views and reactions of the commentators.

Those who have been contributing to this program are responsible journalists representing a variety of opinions. But on careful appraisal it is felt that an assessment of parliamentary debates, of government policies and opposition criticism, demands more than five minutes and a longer interval from the events under review. In "Capital Report" experienced commentators representing different viewpoints have for many years dealt with developments in parliament with full freedom of expression. Moreover, they have the time to put things in perspective, to verify detail and to go if necessary to representatives of the government or the opposition for clarification.

A daily commentary does not permit such a considered approach. Journalists in the gallery have a heavy daily work-load. Any additional assignments may suffer for lack of sufficient time for reflection and checking.

We have reached the conclusion that the public will be better served if the daily reports on parliamentary developments are factual, not opinion or interpretation, based on the despatches of The Canadian Press and United Press. Starting on Monday, June 22, a five-minute summary of each day's developments will be prepared by the central newsroom to be suitably introduced and read in the period following the eight o'clock news. Credits can be given where desirable to the news agencies for quotations or interpretive statements from their despatches.

Commentaries on the week's parliamentary developments will as in the past continue to be given in "Capital Report" or other suitable programs if required.

I will go back to the text of my statement.

I asked Mr. Jennings if we could have a full discussion. I told him that practically no criticism of the series or of individual broadcasts had reached my department. This sudden cancellation of a series without prior consultation with the responsible program department was unprecedented in my twelve years' experience with the C.B.C.

Mr. Jennings indicated that he had had some uneasiness about the program for some time, but did not name particular scripts or speakers. He said that on some occasions correspondents spoke as if what they were saying was factual when they should have qualified it by "I think" or "in my opinion" or "it seems to me". I replied that although this criticism was new to me, our producers could be asked to pay special attention to this point in discussing the phrasing of the material with the speakers.

In the course of our discussion, Mr. Jennings said that he had complete confidence in me, in the talks and public affairs department, in the variety of



viewpoints and speakers selected, and in our handling of commentaries generally. He then told me that the decision to cancel "Preview Commentary" was made by Mr. Bushnell and was final.

I then asked for an appointment with Mr. Bushnell. Mr. Jennings said he would inquire for me, but that Mr. Bushnell was very busy preparing for his appearance the next day before this committee. I said I could stay over if necessary.

On leaving Mr. Jennings' office at noon, I immediately called the network office in Toronto to ask if they had heard about the program change. Neither Mr. Nixon, assistant director of English radio networks, nor Mr. Walker, director for Ontario and English networks, had received this information before.

On Monday afternoon, I saw Mr. Jennings again, and he told me that Mr. Bushnell could not see me that day. He asked me to check again the next morning, to see if an appointment could be arranged in the afternoon.

I called on Mr. Jennings Tuesday morning, and there was no news about the appointment. At noon, outside the parliament buildings, Mr. Bushnell walked by while I was talking to Mr. Fraser, director of Public relations. Mr. Bushnell greeted me by name, and I returned his greeting. However, I did not approach him because Mr. Jennings was trying to arrange an appointment. After lunch I again checked with Mr. Jennings. He advised me that it seemed impossible to see Mr. Bushnell, and that I should return to Toronto and telephone him, that is to say, Mr. Jennings, the next morning.

On Wednesday, June 17, a teletype arrived from Mr. Jennings instructing the network office to substitute a news report for "Preview Commentary", effective Tuesday, June 23 (see Appendix B). The reasons given were rather different from the ones outlined to me two days before. (See Appendix A).

Perhaps I should read appendix B at this time. It is a teletype from Mr. Charles Jennings to Mr. H. G. Walker, with copies to W. H. Hogg, senior news editor; F. W. Peers; E. S. Hallman, director of English radio networks; and D. Nixon, assistant director of English radio networks.

As result of discussions we have been having here for the past several days we have decided that effective next tuesday we will increase our report of parliamentary proceedings by the introduction of five five-minute specially prepared news bulletins from Tuesdays to Saturdays inclusive with the intention that if the House of Commons introduces Saturday morning sittings we will include Monday morning as well. We will continue with this special news service until the close of the present session. It will replace the preview commentaries presently scheduled in these periods. I am asking that Mr. Hogg give special attention to this news project which would be prepared in and delivered from Toronto on the basis of the news agency reports. I would suggest as a title "Parliamentary Report".

This is in line with the proposal discussed over these past many months and expressed in the brief we submitted to the Speakers of both Houses for improved and extended parliamentary news coverage. The acting president also emphasized this to the parliamentary committee.

We feel it is essential that presentation of this service should be as effective as possible. I would therefore ask that the parliamentary news report be read by a second voice. Will Mr. Hogg please consult with those responsible to see that we have the most effective announcing possible. Mr. Hogg may wish to call me to discuss any other points in connection with this.

So far as Monday is concerned the international commentary should of course continue, unless as I have noted above the House should sit on Saturday.



The CHAIRMAN: Then this was a management decision?

Mr. PEERS: This was a management decision. I consulted with Mr. Nixon and my own department. We discussed the reasons given by Mr. Jennings for the cancellation of the program, and the circumstances in which the program change was made. All of those with whom I consulted agreed that the circumstances were extraordinary. I learned that Mr. Walker was in Ottawa and would not be in Toronto until the weekend.

He had gone to Ottawa just about the time I was coming back to Toronto.

I therefore decided to make another trip to Ottawa, at my own expense, to see him and, if necessary, Mr. Bushnell and try to get a fuller explanation for the decision. My colleagues, Mr. Gillis and Mr. Trotter, decided to go with me.

The three of us arrived in Ottawa at 11:30 Wednesday night and immediately saw Mr. Walker, director for Ontario and English networks, who had spent that day in Ottawa. He told us that he had talked at length with Mr. Bushnell and that there was no possibility of changing the decision to cancel the program "Preview Commentary". I told him that I had discussed the decision with others in both Ottawa and Toronto, including Mr. Fraser director of public relations, Mr. Meggs, director for the Ottawa area, and Mr. Nixon, assistant director, English radio networks, and that they all felt it to be an unfortunate decision. He replied that he agreed with this view but that Mr. Bushnell had been placed in an impossible position. He said that Mr. Bushnell had been given two alternatives: either to take this program off the air or the corporate structure of the C.B.C. would be endangered. Mr. Walker said that he was not at liberty to divulge further information but that external pressures were involved.

The CHAIRMAN: This is hearsay from Mr. Walker.

Mr. PEERS: This is what Mr. Walker, who is my line up to management, apparently gave as an explanation.

Mr. TAYLOR: Is it hearsay?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I really feel that observations as to whether or not these things are hearsay are unfortunate, and we should allow the witness to proceed with his statement.

The CHAIRMAN: That is perfectly all right; will you proceed, Mr. Peers.

Mr. PEERS: We asked if these alternatives had been put to Mr. Bushnell by someone with a political connection. Mr. Walker said yes. He told us further that a time limit had been imposed and that there could therefore be no postponement of the cancellation to permit broader discussion within the C.B.C. Indeed, Mr. Walker said the decision was supposed to have been implemented a week earlier. We expressed concern about the impropriety of this specific decision and its possible implications for other programs. Mr. Walker said that he understood our concern on both points but that he would have to go along with the decision. He could not say that a similar situation might not arise again with regard to other programs. We asked him whether Mr. Bushnell had taken into account all the possible consequences which might follow this decision both inside and outside the corporation. He replied positively that all the consequences had been foreseen including staff resignations. We stated to Mr. Walker that, as result of our conversation and in particular of his statement that external pressures had brought about this program change, each of us was faced with a serious decision about the possibility of continuing to serve the C.B.C. We then left and decided that we would try to meet with Mr. Bushnell on Thursday.

On Thursday morning I stayed at my hotel. Mr. Trotter and Mr. Gillis attended the hearings of this committee, hoping to approach Mr. Bushnell personally and inform him of our desire for a meeting. They returned to



my room about 11.15 a.m. and told me that Mr. Bushnell was unwell and had not been at the committee hearings. I telephoned Mr. Walker and learned that Mr. Bushnell was not well enough to see me, although he was at the office.

We went back to Toronto Thursday afternoon. On Friday I reported the results of my trip to Mr. Nixon and Mr. Hogg, chief news editor. They shared my concern about the reaction of the C.B.C. to the reported pressure, and Mr. Nixon arranged for Mr. Walker to meet with a number of senior Toronto people at 1.00 p.m., Saturday, June 20. Among those present at this meeting were Mr. Hogg, Mr. Nixon, Mr. McDonald, director of the English T.V. network, Mr. Rugheimer, assistant director of T.V. network, and Mr. Lyall Brown, director of public relations, Ontario. We had another meeting Sunday afternoon which was attended as well by Mr. Hallman, director of English radio networks, who that morning had returned from overseas.

In those meetings the two points that I have mentioned above were confirmed by Mr. Walker: that there had been representations from someone politically connected; and that the alternative to cancellation would be a very serious one for C.B.C. management.

Mr. McINTOSH: Mr. Chairman, before we go any further, I would suggest that this is all—

The CHAIRMAN: Is this on a point of order?

Mr. McINTOSH: Yes, this is on a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN: Speak as loudly as you can, please.

Mr. McINTOSH: This was confirmed by Mr. Walker: how was it confirmed by Mr. Walker?

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Walker said again on Saturday, and said again on Sunday.

The CHAIRMAN: We will have a chance to question the witnesses after Mr. Peers completes the statement. Continue, please, Mr. Peers.

Mr. PEERS: At the Sunday afternoon meeting, the group present, with the exception of Mr. Walker, drew up and signed this statement—I have a photographic copy of it here, which I will give to the chairman:

From

Toronto Senior Group

To

Director for Ontario and English Networks Division

#### *Cancellation of Preview Commentary*

We, the undersigned, acknowledge management's right—

The CHAIRMAN: Continue, please.

Mr. PEERS:

We, the undersigned, acknowledge management's right to remove any program from C.B.C. schedules, but we protest against the decision by management to cancel Preview Commentary in circumstances which suggest that the decision was taken as a result of external pressures, actual or anticipated.

Because we believe that the principle of freedom from political or other interference, or the appearance of such interference, is absolutely essential to the effective discharge of the corporation's program responsibilities, we ask that the decision be reviewed; and that action be taken immediately to continue in the radio schedule a daily commentary on national affairs from Ottawa.

In view of the urgency of this situation, we would ask you to forward this statement to the acting president immediately, and on behalf of this group request an audience with the acting president at the earliest possible moment.



The signatures follow:

L. Brown, E. S. Hallman, W. H. Hogg, J. M. Kannawin, P. McDonald, J. D. Nixon, F. W. Peers, G. Rugheimer.

Do you want identification of any of these now, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: Not yet.

Mr. PEERS: Three copies were signed by the group. Two were handed to Mr. Walker, and the third, by general consent of the group, was left with Mr. Hallman. Mr. Walker undertook to try to arrange a meeting later that evening with Mr. Bushnell who was expected to arrive from Ottawa for the meeting of the Board of Directors.

We met Mr. Bushnell at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, June 21. All those who had signed the statement were present, under the chairmanship of Mr. Walker.

When Mr. Bushnell arrived he read the signed statement in our presence. He read it silently. He asked us to speak up and give reasons for putting such a protest before him. I outlined the unusual procedures by which the program was cancelled, recalled that I had tried to see him in Ottawa on three occasions, and referred to Mr. Walker's explanation of the change as related to outside pressures. Mr. Hallman and others raised similar points. Mr. Bushnell said that the program had been unsatisfactory; that there was bias, immaturity, and imbalance of views. He also stated that the decision was his in concert with other senior officers in Ottawa.

Mr. Hallman asked Mr. Bushnell if he had received criticism of the program, since there had been almost no criticism brought to the attention of himself, Mr. Nixon, or Mr. Peers, in the entire time the program or its predecessor "Ottawa Today" had been on the air.

Mr. Bushnell said he had received criticisms from three sources:

- (1) by word of mouth from private citizens—friends, acquaintances, etc.
- (2) from people in responsible positions, business men, and so on; and
- (3) from politicians.

Mr. Hallman asked Mr. Bushnell if he expected C.B.C. to be under heavy criticism if Preview Commentary were cancelled—criticism not only from the public, but also from the press, since the reasons given in Mr. Jennings' statement seemed to imply that the correspondents appearing in the program were irresponsible or biased, incompetent or unable to prepare an adequate commentary in the interval between a night session and 8:00 o'clock the next morning.

Mr. Bushnell replied that Preview Commentary was not being cancelled; that this was simply an experiment with a different form of program to cover parliamentary affairs. He said that the parliamentary session would last only a few more weeks, and asked why we should not try this other format. He agreed that the decision would bring severe criticism from press and public. Mr. Hallman asked him, as a broadcaster of many years' experience, whether he could say honestly that the substitution of the reading of wire copy for Preview Commentary was a sound program decision. Mr. Bushnell replied that he could not.

Mr. Hallman asked Mr. Bushnell to consider the disadvantages of the program change in terms of public criticism, reactions from the press, staff doubts, implications for other programs, and possible resignations. Mr. Bushnell said he was fully aware of all the factors, and expected this kind of reaction.

Mr. Hallman then asked what positive gain for the C.B.C. would result from the decision. Mr. Bushnell replied that he would not discuss it.

Mr. Bushnell was asked whether the decision would be reviewed by the board. He said that it would be one of the first items on the agenda. I asked what would be the effect if the board reversed the decision. Mr. Bushnell said he supposed he would be sent to Siberia.



Mr. Bushnell was asked whether it would be possible for Mr. Peers to appear before the board to answer questions about the series. Mr. Bushnell gave no assurance that this would be possible.

Mr. Walker asked that the meeting break for a few minutes. After the recess, Mr. Bushnell asked those present to put their confidence in him and in the action being taken regarding Preview Commentary. He said that it was sometimes better to lose a skirmish in order to win a battle.

Mr. Bushnell concluded by handing back the signed statement to Mr. Walker, with the comment that he had never received it. After Mr. Bushnell left, the group expressed itself as being dissatisfied with the explanations given for cancelling the program and for maintaining that decision.

During the day I had become convinced that the only remaining hope of ensuring full review of a decision which appeared to be politically motivated was to make sure that the C.B.C. board of directors had all the facts at their disposal. Sunday afternoon I had talked briefly to Dr. W. L. Morton, the only member of the board of directors whom Mr. Gillis, Mr. Trotter and I all knew.

After the meeting with Mr. Bushnell, I told the group that in my view there was only one more step we could take within the corporation. That was, to give as much information as we had to a board member, and I named Dr. Morton. In the presence of Mr. Walker, I asked Mr. Hallman to accompany me, and he in turn asked Mr. McDonald to join us.

Dr. Morton received us, and after discussion assured us that he would undertake to see that the whole situation had a full discussion in the meeting of the board of directors the following day. He also agreed that he would try to arrange an opportunity for us to appear before the board on this issue.

The senior group met again on Monday morning, June 22, with Mr. Walker as chairman. Mr. Hallman and I communicated to the group the assurances given to us by Dr. Morton. Mr. Walker told us that he had just had a lengthy telephone conversation with the president of the C.B.C. Mr. Alphonse Ouimet. He reported that until his phone call Mr. Ouimet had no knowledge of the Preview Commentary situation.

The board of directors met during the day, but did not call on any of us. In the evening I received word from Mr. Hallman that Dr. Morton had informed him that he had failed completely in getting a full discussion. He said that the board had confirmed the decision of management to cancel Preview Commentary.

Throughout the various meetings, I had kept my colleagues, Mr. Gillis, and Mr. Trotter generally informed about developments. On Monday night we met at my house and decided that the three of us should resign because:

- (a) We thought that the decision to make a program change because of external pressure, real or anticipated, threatened the integrity of public affairs programming;
- (b) We thought that our relations with those who contributed to programs would be compromised;
- (c) We had taken every step open to us within the corporation structure to have this decision seriously reconsidered; and
- (d) This action would free us to make the public aware of the issues involved.

Our resignations took effect—rather, were submitted, to take effect—Tuesday, June 23. On Wednesday the C.B.C. board of directors made a thorough review of the program decision, examining scripts and lists of speakers, and they discussed the circumstances surrounding the decision to cancel.

Late Wednesday afternoon the board announced its intention of resuming Preview Commentary, beginning Monday, June 29.



The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Peers.

Mr. Lambert, you had your hand up first, I think.

Mr. LAMBERT: Mr. Chairman, in view of the witness' lengthy statement, there is a number of questions which I would like to ask. We will go right to the nub of the matter. In the statement there is a reference to "clandestine political influence". Are these the words that you and your associates used in defining what you considered to be the reasons back of the cancellation of this program?

Mr. PEERS: These are the words we used.

Mr. LAMBERT: What do you mean by these words?

Mr. PEERS: First "influence": we had the word of Mr. Walker that the decision to cancel Preview Commentary was taken after representations by someone outside the corporation.

As for—let me see what the second word is—"political": we meant by that, the answer which Mr. Walker gave us in answer to our question, "was the representation from someone who was politically connected?"—Mr. Walker's answer was "Yes".

"Clandestine" we used that word meaning, I think, "hidden", because Mr. Walker had at every turn assured us he had been informed of this in confidence, and assured us that even the amount he was able to tell us was in confidence to us. In other words, nothing should be made public while we were members of the corporation.

Mr. LAMBERT: Regarding what you have told us that Mr. Walker had spoken to you about, have you any evidence to place before this committee of this so-called "clandestine political influence"?

Mr. PEERS: I have not. I assume others in the corporation have. I think this statement will lead to those who have.

Mr. LAMBERT: But you assume that?

Mr. PEERS: I should explain, Mr. Lambert, when Mr. Walker told us that he could not reveal the identity of the person or persons who had been in touch with C.B.C. management, I said, for my own part that did not matter and, in fact, in some ways, I would rather not know the identity of the person or persons. My stand was that it was a matter of what the C.B.C.'s action and procedures were after receiving complaints which may or may not have been legitimate. In other words I was not concerned with anything other than the management's action and response to such influence.

Mr. LAMBERT: You say there was this "political influence". What was your information as to who had wielded this influence? Did you have any names, or have you any names?

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Lambert, I have not any names because I did not ask for names at any time, and Mr. Walker explained each time the information was confidential and he could not divulge anything further than he already had.

Mr. LAMBERT: Further, just on whom was this political influence wielded?

Mr. PEERS: According to Mr. Walker, it was wielded on C.B.C. management, and he went further in our Monday morning meeting,—

Mr. TROTTER: I would like to say—

Mr. LAMBERT: Go ahead, Mr. Peers.

Mr. PEERS: —and re-affirmed or said again—perhaps I should use that word—he said again there had been external pressures, and he said again—he elaborated the nature of the alternative that was put to the corporation. The alternative that was put to the corporation was—and I am trying to remember his words—"the removal of top management".



Mr. LAMBERT: When you say, "management" do you specify any specific individuals?

Mr. PEERS: I have not specified any particular individuals, except in my report of what Mr. Jennings had told me, that the decision was that of Mr. Bushnell.

Mr. LAMBERT: No, I am referring specifically here to Mr. Walker's statement to you.

Mr. PEERS: No. Mr. Walker had told us that information which he gave us on Wednesday night came from a long talk that he had during the day with Mr. Bushnell.

I am not quite clear of the intent of your question, other than that.

Mr. LAMBERT: You said there had been pressure on management?

Mr. PEERS: Yes.

Mr. LAMBERT: Just on whom in management?

Mr. PEERS: I could not say that—"management"—by which I assume we mean "top management".

The CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to add to that, Mr. Trotter?

Mr. TROTTER: I want to remind Mr. Peers that Mr. Walker said—and it is in the statement—that Mr. Bushnell had been placed in an impossible position.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Lambert?

Mr. LAMBERT: Further, did you have any information as to when this had happened, and under what circumstances?

Mr. PEERS: Only this, Mr. Lambert, that on Monday—that was the fifteenth—Mr. Jennings told me that he had received a call from Mr. Bushnell on Friday—I think it was in the afternoon—but Friday, at any rate, and what Mr. Bushnell had to say to him sent him—put him into a dreadful state of mind. He thought about it for an hour, and I think he said that he paced the floor and that he had, at the end of the hour, come up with this statement which he presented to me. That is the appendix "A", which is Mr. Jennings' words.

Mr. LAMBERT: This was on the afternoon of June 15?

Mr. PEERS: This telephone call did not necessarily refer, of course...

Mr. LAMBERT: But when did it take place?

Mr. PEERS: The telephone call from Mr. Bushnell to Mr. Jennings took place on Friday, the Friday before June 15—I do not have the date. It would be the twelfth.

Mr. LAMBERT: These are the circumstances you feel govern the situation?

Mr. PEERS: It is part of the circumstances.

Mr. LAMBERT: Do you happen to know how this pressure was applied?

Mr. PEERS: Not at all.

Mr. LAMBERT: Do you know any reasons why it may have been applied?

Mr. PEERS: Not at all.

Mr. LAMBERT: And if this pressure was applied, do you know whether it had any influence on this decision?

Mr. PEERS: I refer, Mr. Lambert, to my statement in which I report my discussion with Mr. Walker on Wednesday—that is on page 3, two-thirds of the way down, the third paragraph, somewhere in the middle: "He"—that is Mr. Walker "replied that he agreed with this view"—that is, the decision was unfortunate—"but that Mr. Bushnell had been placed in an impossible position. He said that Mr. Bushnell had been given two alterna-



tives"—and I mention, in general, what those alternatives were. In other words, I have only Mr. Walker's word this was an important element in the decision.

But since Mr. Walker is the way in which I ordinarily communicate with management, and since I could not get to Mr. Bushnell to get his word on it during that week, I felt this was probably so.

Mr. LAMBERT: Mr. Bushnell had been given two alternatives; by whom?

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Walker did not disclose that to us, and said that he could not disclose that to us. But we questioned him in those general terms: "Was it someone outside the corporation?" "Yes". Then the other question was, "Was it someone with a political connection?" "Yes".

Mr. LAMBERT: Notwithstanding your discussions with Mr. Jennings and the statement appearing in appendix "A", you told Mr. Walker?

Mr. PEERS: Combined with the other circumstances I have mentioned. I had asked for a review of the position on ordinary program considerations. I wanted to go over lists, scripts, discuss the weaknesses of the series, if there had been grave ones. Mr. Jennings, on the Monday and Tuesday before, commented to me that this was not a decision with which he was personally sympathetic. He thought the series was a defensible one before the parliamentary committee or any other unbiased group of judges. So, my attempts to discuss the decision on program lines collapsed.

Mr. LAMBERT: Your position is an administrative position, I take it?

Mr. PEERS: My position is partly administrative, I should say; but it is more centrally the application of C.B.C. policy to programming. In other words, it is not administrative in the narrow sense of administration.

Mr. LAMBERT: You have been involved in program changes before?

Mr. PEERS: Yes, I have been.

Mr. LAMBERT: Is any program change extraordinary?

Mr. PEERS: The cancellation of a series without some prior discussion with the network or department heads is most extraordinary.

Mr. LAMBERT: This was a management decision, though?

Mr. PEERS: That is right.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I would like to ask a supplementary question on that point. In your experience, Mr. Peers, have you ever before had a program cancelled by orders of the president or the acting president without discussion?

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Chairman and Mr. Pickersgill, I think we had a program cancelled two or three weeks—no, four or five weeks ago by order of the controller of broadcasting, which we were able to reinstate after we had given him an explanation. It was a broadcast on the Canada Council.

This program was reinstated. There have been orders that have come out which sometimes are accompanied by sufficient explanation that we carry them out with alacrity. Sometimes we think that a further review is called for, and it is understood that usually it will receive that protection. But any decision of management is final.

Mr. LAMBERT: What did you do to check any information before you arrived at your conclusion?

Mr. PEERS: The attempts to check the information were: my expressed desire to see Mr. Bushnell and discuss the matter with him. I have mentioned that in my statement. That took place on three days.

In addition there was my discussion with the chief news editor in Toronto, whose department was being asked to replace the program, to see whether he had information that I did not have.

Mr. LAMBERT: That was Mr. Walker?



Mr. PEERS: No, Mr. Hogg. The chief news editor is Mr. Hogg.

Then there was the trip to Ottawa again, when I learned that Mr. Walker would not be back in Toronto for the rest of the week, and the attempt to discuss the matter with Mr. Walker which, as I have said, was a discussion which gave us some additional information.

Mr. LAMBERT: But these were attempts to discuss the program, not the cancellation of the program?

Mr. PEERS: They were attempts to discuss the cancellation of the program in relation to the views which Mr. Jennings had given me, and the teletype he had sent as reasons for the cancellation of the program.

Mr. LAMBERT: This had nothing to do with information that there was political pressure or influence?

Mr. PEERS: Definite information that there was political influence did not come to me until Wednesday night. These very questions related to that.

Mr. LAMBERT: It developed when you made your statement on Monday or Tuesday?

Mr. PEERS: First I would like to say that the statement which Mr. Walker gave us about external pressures was made of course before the three of us. I should also be quite candid and state that I could not see any reason.

Mr. LAMBERT: Do you feel that you should be less than candid here?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Chairman, I object to that question.

The CHAIRMAN: Please continue, Mr. Lambert.

Mr. PEERS: I say that merely as a venture into an opinion that I have tried so far to check the facts, Mr. Lambert. And I should say that in reviewing the situation in my mind and in discussion with my colleagues here, I could not think of any likely explanation for Mr. Walker trying to mislead me on this point. It is the last thing that a corporation official would attempt to do with a subordinate, to give a reason for any program move as being related to any kind of external influence or pressure.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you worked for any other corporation?

Mr. PEERS: I have worked with other organizations.

The CHAIRMAN: I asked if you have worked with any other corporation.

Mr. PEERS: I am not sure whether the University of Alberta is a corporation.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: It is.

The CHAIRMAN: I mean a business corporation.

Mr. LAMBERT: You made your statement concerning this political influence, and when you did that, did you consider the implications, if that statement should prove to be wrong?

Mr. PEERS: Inasmuch as I am capable of doing that without legal training, I think I did.

Mr. LAMBERT: Did you consider the implications as to other people who would be brought into this?

Mr. PEERS: I thought that I had taken, as I have said in my statement, every move that I could within the corporation and retaining the oath—not the oath, the promise, to respect confidences within the corporation, before I took that step. Then I thought that this was the only additional step that I could take which would raise the matter for public discussion.

Now, of course, I realized that as a result of public discussion—and because I did not think I should give the names of the persons who exerted,



or who were alleged to have exerted this influence—I did not believe that public discussion would find me to be wrong. I had a reasonable amount of confidence that my information was sound enough to stand up.

I hoped that that re-realization of the necessity for the corporation to continue as an independent organization working under broad lines and directed by its Board of Directors—that the corporation would come out more strongly for the investigation, even though in the meantime some persons within the corporation might be embarrassed.

Mr. MORRIS: Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of order. The motion before this committee is to hear witnesses today having regard to the allegations of clandestine political activity. Therefore I move, seconded by Mr. McIntosh, that in view of the fact that the witness has testified that he has no information, but only hearsay, that the witness be thanked for his appearance and dismissed, and that we get back to our agenda. I ask that my motion be put.

Mr. ROBICHAUD: Closure.

The CHAIRMAN: That motion was seconded by Mr. McIntosh.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: It is not a point of order at all. Moreover, it is a debatable motion.

Mr. MCINTOSH: If there is nothing other than what we have before us except this statement, I suggest it is largely a matter between management and staff, and of no concern to us. But I would like Mr. Peers to explain what he means when he says:

During the day I had become convinced that the only remaining hope of insuring full review of a decision which appeared to be politically motivated was to make sure that the C.B.C. board of directors had all the facts at their disposal.

Can Mr. Peers explain what he means by political influence? And was it his policy to make sure that the board of management always had the facts at their disposal? Was it not his job to do that, and if not, then this entire problem is of no concern of ours in this committee.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I would like to oppose this motion of Mr. Morris for several reasons: the first is that there is a decision which has already been taken by this committee, which Mr. Morris is seeking to reverse. That decision was not merely to hear the witnesses before you, but also to hear representatives of management with respect to this matter. So I maintain it would be a denial of elementary justice to hear the representatives of management after having dismissed these witnesses, and not to give to them an opportunity to reply. That is my first objection.

My second objection is that it was agreed in the House yesterday in the discussion between the Minister of National Revenue and myself that we should have a calm, judicial, and non-partisan consideration of this matter with a view to getting at the truth.

My third reason is that the witness has given us precise and detailed information about the conversations he had with certain representatives of management and certain other officials of the corporation, and that we cannot expect to get the truth unless we hear the other persons referred to as having direct connection with this matter, and who were superior to Mr. Peers.

For these reasons I think this motion should be defeated.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. CHAMBERS: I have to oppose the motion, Mr. Chairman. The witness has brought before us what seem to be very serious charges, not only with respect to the administration of the C.B.C. but also with respect to certain



unnamed politicians, and I think every opportunity should be given to them to substantiate those charges. I have some questions which in due course I would like to put.

Mr. PEERS: May I correct one word. I have not said anything about politicians. I have said something about persons politically connected. I was very careful in my question to Mr. Walker and he replied in kind.

Mr. CHAMBERS: The implications drawn were very clear.

Mr. FISHER: I would like to speak against the motion. It seems to me with the evidence of the meeting with Mr. Walker and a later meeting with Mr. Bushnell that we certainly cannot turn our backs on this. Mr. Walker is directly in charge of these gentlemen; he was their supervisor. If he gave them this assurance, it seems to me that this is much more than hearsay—this is the normal chain of command. The other point is that the evidence in so far as the relationship with Mr. Jennings and in so far as the telephone call is concerned, certainly substantiates a very mysterious situation into which we will have to go in much more detail, otherwise it will become a festering sore.

I am very strongly opposed to the motion.

Mr. TAYLOR: In connection with this motion, a question was put to you, Mr. Peers, in Toronto. Do you have this—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

The CHAIRMAN: Order.

Mr. TAYLOR: The evidence today amounts to hearsay and is out of order. The other point is we still have a corporation to look after. We should adjourn here today. Apparently these two gentlemen have been invited back to the corporation. We have shown today that the evidence is hearsay. These persons may rejoin the corporation and we will be driving a wider wedge if we continue with this hearing at this time.

Mr. BELL (*Saint John-Albert*): I feel the motion has some merit but is a little bit premature at this time. Would the mover and the seconder hold it over and put it again later?

Some hon. MEMBERS: No, no.

The CHAIRMAN: Are we ready for the question, gentlemen? Here is the motion. Mr. Morris moved, seconded by Mr. McIntosh, that this committee thank the witnesses, dismiss them, and return to consideration of the committee's general agenda.

Those in favour of the motion?

Contrary?

I declare the motion defeated.

Mr. Lambert, would you please continue?

Mr. LAMBERT: We were on the point of considering the implications, the effects of your statement, should it prove to be wrong. Did you consider that?

Mr. PEERS: I hope I did, Mr. Lambert.

Mr. LAMBERT: Did you consider that if you were wrong much more would be brought into disrepute?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I am raising a point of order. I understood that the decision you announced at the beginning of this motion, which no one dissented from, was that we were to seek evidence from the witnesses, and not opinions. I suggest Mr. Lambert is now going into the field of opinion and it is quite irrelevant to what is before us.

Mr. LAMBERT: With all due respect, Mr. Pickersgill, the witness all along has said he was "of the opinion that". I will put my question again, Mr. Chairman.



Mr. PEERS: Shall I answer the question?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Are you ruling on the point of order I raised? I am entitled to a ruling from the chair. I consider this question does not relate to the facts at all. We are asking the witness questions about his state of mind. If we do that with all the witnesses we will never finish this inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN: The reason I continued with Mr. Lambert is that I ruled your point of order out of order because we have been getting opinions from the witness all the way through.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I dissent from that view.

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Gillis, Mr. Trotter and I tried to line up the factors on each side. As is usual in human judgments one can always try to find out where the balance lies and act on that to the best of one's knowledge and conscience. That is what I attempted to do.

Mr. LAMBERT: If we return to page four of your statement and take the third paragraph, the third sentence, when you report on your interview with Messrs. Nixon and Hogg, you state:

They shared my concern about the reaction of the C.B.C. to the reported pressure...

Are you therefore referring to Mr. Walker's information to you?

Mr. PEERS: Yes. I am using the word "reported" because Mr. Walker had reported that to me.

Mr. WALKER: Further down, in the next paragraph, you say:

In those meetings the two points that I have mentioned above were confirmed by Mr. Walker . . .

How were they confirmed by Mr. Walker?

Mr. PEERS: I think I was asked a question of that sort before. Mr. Walker said again what he said to us in our Wednesday night meeting. He said on Saturday morning and on Sunday morning that there was influence brought to bear; that there was external influence in making this program decision. I see Mr. Hallman, for example, is here; he was present at that meeting.

Mr. LAMBERT: He is not here before us. Rather than confirming it is a repetition of the statement.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: As a good classicist that is what confirmation means.

Mr. LAMBERT: On page five of the statement signed by yourself and your colleagues, in the second paragraph you say:

Because we believe that the principle of freedom from political or other interference . . .

Would you elaborate on the words, "political or other interference"?

Mr. PEERS: Well, I think the point there would be that there are many representations which can be made to a public corporation like the C.B.C. that should be given weight, should be given thought and should be taken into account in deciding action. Those influences can be political or can be from what I suppose we might call large organizations such as the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce or the Canadian Labour Congress.

But such representations and such advice as we get from bodies of that kind or from political organizations, or from political leaders, can be legitimate and non-binding—unless they are combined with an alternative it is offering as a consequence; then, I think, the influence becomes at least attempted interference. Once again, it is not so much whether or not interference is



attempted; the question which concerns us very much was whether we as a corporation had allowed our program department to be unduly influenced by such interference, and that is the point that was before us.

The CHAIRMAN: While Mr. Lambert is framing his next question, I would like to ask you if you would consider the Radio League of Canada as one of those possible lobbying groups?

Mr. PEERS: I think any organization which combines to direct themselves to certain ends can be considered as lobbying.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): Are you a member of the radio league?

Mr. PEERS: No.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): Were you a member at some time?

Mr. PEERS: I am not certain whether there was a different radio league preceding this one. I was a member of one at one time.

Mr. LAMBERT: We go now to page 7 and in the middle of the page it states:

During the day I had become convinced that the only remaining hope of ensuring full review of a decision which appeared to be politically motivated . . .

In other words, did you entirely disregard Mr. Jennings' reasons for the program change?

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Jennings, if I may say so—

Mr. LAMBERT: Would you answer my question yes or no.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Well, Mr. Chairman—

Mr. LAMBERT: I am asking this question. Did you disregard Mr. Jennings' reasons when you made this statement "which appeared to be politically motivated"?

Mr. PEERS: I did not entirely disregard them. I disregarded them to some extent; in other words, Mr. Lambert, I did not think in the way Mr. Jennings put them to me that his reasons were paramount or that even Mr. Jennings thought they were paramount.

Mr. LAMBERT: In other words, regardless of what management stated to you, you felt that there was a political motivation.

Mr. PEERS: Not regardless of what management said, but in the light of what management said.

Mr. LAMBERT: All right; what did management say to you? Let us get down to this political motivation.

Mr. PEERS: Management, in the person of Mr. Walker, said to us as a group, this group, and said to me, with others, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, that this decision was related to a representation made to management. I probably could state it more clearly if I read the text, but I am trying to remember the text. This decision, relating to Preview Commentary, was made after representation by an external influence. In answer to the question: was the external influence politically connected, the answer was yes.

Mr. LAMBERT: In other words, when at page 6 you report a conversation with Mr. Bushnell, in which he states:

He said that the parliamentary session would last only a few more weeks, and asked why we should not try this other format.

You disagree with this programming experiment.

Mr. PEERS: We continued the discussion and Mr. Bushnell said he could not regard this as a sound program decision. This was in answer to a question by Mr. Hallman.

Mr. LAMBERT: All right; I am drawing now to the end of my questioning.



The CHAIRMAN: Is this your final question, Mr. Lambert?

Mr. LAMBERT: On page 8 of your stated reasons for resignation, you state:

We thought that the decision to make a program change because of external pressure, real or anticipated, threatened the integrity of public affairs programming.

Do you feel that there was at that time no actual political pressure?

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Lambert, I am suggesting that. I have the word of Mr. Walker. It was a word that ordinarily I would accept 100 per cent but, as you have indicated, there is just the possibility that Mr. Walker exaggerated or that someone, I think Mr. Bushnell, who discussed the situation with Mr. Walker had exaggerated; and it may have been that any political influence up to that date was entirely an opinion.

What I think was a thing which we as a corporation had to regard seriously was that the corporation management felt that this decision, if not taken, would lead to certain dire consequences. That might have been anticipated political pressure rather than real or existant at the moment.

Mr. FISHER: Could I ask Mr. Trotter and Mr. Gillis if they confirm absolutely the information in this report?

Mr. TROTTER: In so far as we were present at the meetings, we can confirm it absolutely. We, of course, were not present at the meetings, with Mr. Peers, on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, with the senior group, whose names appear at the bottom of the statement.

Mr. D. H. GILLIS: I confirm the statement down to and including the Wednesday evening discussion with Mr. Walker.

Mr. FISHER: Mr. Peers, we have this parliamentary committee here. Was there ever at any time any question or idea in your mind that this committee in itself was the political influence?

Mr. PEERS: My idea was that it was something that should be handled within the corporation, and that was my effort right up until Monday night. I certainly made no move to get in touch with any member of the parliamentary committee so long as I was a member of the corporation's staff.

The CHAIRMAN: Does that answer your question, Mr. Fisher?

Mr. FISHER: No. There was no idea or thought in your mind that this committee was or could be the political influence.

Mr. PEERS: It was not in my mind.

Mr. FISHER: In so far as Preview Commentary is concerned, do you know whether there was a record kept of the previous broadcasts?

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Jennings submitted a list of the speakers in this and other commentaries to this committtee some time ago. I believe it has been distributed.

The CHAIRMAN: That is correct.

Mr. PEERS: Is that the answer to your question?

Mr. FISHER: Do you know whether these commentaries were reproduced and distributed in any form?

Mr. PEERS: You mean the scripts?

Mr. FISHER: Yes.

Mr. PEERS: Not so far as I know. They may have been. Sometimes, if members of the listening audience write in and want to look at a script to know what a person has said, we will, within the limits of our facilities, send out such scripts so that people can check. We—particularly in current affairs—take the view that such commentaries are then in the public domain, as if they had been published in the newspapers.



Mr. FISHER: But to your knowledge, there were no mimeographed copies made of Preview Commentary available for distribution.

Mr. PEERS: Not from our office. The only thing I can think of that might relate at all to your question is that I have been told by the producer here in Ottawa, Jim Taylor, that some weeks ago Mr. Jennings had asked for copies of the scripts to be sent over to his office each morning. I checked that with Mr. Jennings and found out that was so.

Mr. FISHER: Have you any idea on what date that took place?

Mr. PEERS: No, I have not. I think, again, I was told that the scripts started going over around the middle of May and that at a certain stage they asked for the scripts back to May 1. Mr. Jennings could correct that; I am not entirely sure, because it was not a very big point in my inquiries.

Mr. FISHER: When you spoke to Dr. Morton, did you have any indication that the members of the board, or that Dr. Morton had given serious consideration to this question—perhaps it had been raised with him by mail?

Mr. PEERS: I have no indication that Dr. Morton had ever heard a word about it until I spoke to him.

Mr. FISHER: In other words, the management had not consulted the board of directors in connection with this change, in so far as you know?

Mr. FLYNN: I object. That question—

Mr. PICKERSGILL: This question is a great deal more factual than many of the questions we have heard.

Mr. FLYNN: This witness is not qualified to answer this question.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions along that line, Mr. Fisher?

Mr. FISHER: When you decided to resign, was this a decision that you took in concert with Mr. Trotter and Mr. Gillis?

Mr. PEERS: The three of us decided, since we had started on the road together we would continue together.

Mr. FISHER: Did you ever, at any time, once you made the decision, try to influence any other people to resign?

Mr. PEERS: A few asked me, I tried to influence not to resign, and I influenced no one to resign.

Mr. FLYNN: That is, again, out of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: It is exactly the line of questioning we had from Mr. Lambert. I think the questions should be treated alike.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Fisher, will you try and keep it to the point, please? You have got over those two points now: we have been fair.

Mr. FISHER: You were aware, when you resigned, that this might lead to such consequences—that is, further resignations?

Mr. PEERS: I would have to be aware of that, I think. If some people chose to interpret the whole procedure as a vote of lack of confidence in me, I suppose that result might flow with some people.

Mr. FISHER: Since your resignations have you had any further discussions on the particular points that were made to you regarding interference, with Mr. Walker.

Mr. PEERS: No.

Mr. FISHER: Have you had any further discussions on it with Mr. Hallman?

Mr. PEERS: I should amend my last answer. I had discussions only to the point where I said that, naturally, if I was called—or, since I had been called before this committee, I would have to, of course, mention his name as the source of my information.



Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): Mr. Peers, I would just like to clear up one question to which you made some reference. Other than the one conversation, or the conversation with Mr. Walker—which, until Mr. Walker appears, must be regarded as hearsay—is there any other suggestion of any political interference brought to bear? Are you aware of any other?

Mr. PEERS: I have one more recent bit of information that might, I suppose, again, be hearsay: it is something told to me. Is that hearsay; I do not know?

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): If you wish to make some reference to it, you are entitled to, provided it, again, comes under the category of hearsay. That is up to you.

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Hallman has told me since my resignation that the board of directors discussed the matter—that he appeared as one of the representatives of the senior group of employees in Toronto and that in his presence the matter of political influence was discussed by the board of directors before the C.B.C. staff representatives and management representatives.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): I wonder if you would just repeat that last sentence again, please, Mr. Peers.

Mr. PEERS: Since my resignation Mr. Hallman has told me that he appeared before the board of directors of the C.B.C.; he and, I think, one or two others: Mr. Hogg, I believe, and Mr.—I had better not say, because I am not absolutely clear on this point. Mr. Hallman and one or two others appeared as representatives of the C.B.C. senior group—the ones who sent this memorandum which is contained here—excluding me, because I was off staff by that time.

Mr. Hallman and these others appeared before the C.B.C. board of directors, and the matter of the representations that had been made to the C.B.C. was discussed before the board of directors—by the board of directors, before representatives of staff and also before the representatives of C.B.C. management—“before” means “in the presence of”.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): I asked you if there was any suggestion of any further political interference, like these representations of a political nature?

Mr. PEERS: The representations that Mr. Walker was telling me about—

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): Other than Mr. Walker?

Mr. PEERS: And, I think, the representations that Mr. Hallman was telling me about.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): You think the representations by Mr. Hallman were of a political nature?

Mr. PEERS: No—I had in mind the representations that Mr. Hallman referred to as having been discussed before the C.B.C. board of directors.

Mr. SMITHS (*Calgary South*): You will agree, all rather indefinite? Let us come to another point. In your long history with the corporation can you think of any other occasion, by the action which you virtually took, in which you entered into the administration of the corporation? Have you any other examples? You state that your position in the corporation is one, basically, of administration, and you have also some policy control. Have you ever taken any other similar action which virtually enters into the administration of the corporation to this extent?

Mr. PEERS: I wonder whether by “any other action of a similar nature”—

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): Have you threatened to resign any time?

Mr. PEERS: Once before.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): What were the circumstances in that particular case?



Mr. PEERS: It was a decision by C.B.C. management not to have the program Press Conference deal with the gas pipeline debate.

The CHAIRMAN: Touché.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): I am delighted to hear this. Perhaps you would give us more detail on this.

Mr. PEERS: I had proposed to C.B.C. management that on a certain Tuesday—I think it was—we invite the Hon. George Drew, who was then the figure, in my view, most in the news in relation to this pipe line controversy—he was then leader of the opposition.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): What would be the date of this, please, Mr. Peers? Just roughly?

Mr. PEERS: Roughly, May or June, three years ago.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Pickersgill, followed by Mr. Chambers.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I have several questions I would like to put to Mr. Peers.

The first question I would like to put to Mr. Peers is this: would he regard an opinion expressed to management by a politician about their programs, even a very unflattering and unfavourable opinion, as “political influence”?

Mr. PEERS: I would not regard it as political influence unless management seemed to give it undue and urgent consideration, to a degree they would not give such a representation from any other important person or person of substance.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: My second question is this: do you think that politicians, particularly ministers, should not express to management views on their programs?

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Chairman, I suppose I have to answer this?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, that is a fair question.

Mr. PEERS: I think it is debatable. I think that opinions from members of parliament certainly should be welcome and should be given careful thought, just as the opinions of any other responsible citizen should be given careful thought.

The opinions of C.B.C.—or, rather of members of cabinet—I think under the old system of financing programs with licences, that a member—this is pure opinion, as you can see—

Mr. FLYNN: Like the rest.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Exactly.

Mr. PEERS: I think that an opinion from a cabinet minister is very much like that of the opinion of an M.P. I am not certain I would say that it is now when the C.B.C. has to go before parliament for its grants on a basis which is not a statutory basis.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: The third question I want to put on this particular line is this: in your view, was the political—

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): Would Mr. Pickersgill speak up?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: In your view, was the political interference, to which you understood Mr. Walker to make reference—was it accompanied by a threat of the consequences to the corporation if it was not followed?

Mr. PEERS: I am not sure it was accompanied by such a threat. I am at least sure that some in management thought there was a threat attached.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Is it the apprehension or the suspicion of the threat that, in your view, constituted the pressure or the influence rather?

The CHAIRMAN: That is, in your view.



Mr. PEERS: In my view, it may have constituted an influence; but the important thing was the C.B.C. action following upon the representation—whatever the representation was, and however urgently it was dealt with.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Peers, you have been a member of the staff of the C.B.C. for a considerable time. Have you ever before taken the step of approaching a member of the board with a view to getting a question put before the board?

Mr. PEERS: I have not.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chambers, followed by Mr. McCleave; and then we will have to leave it.

Mr. CHAMBERS: I have a couple of questions. It was reported in the press Mr. Peers had made an investigation before resigning from the C.B.C. Is this correct?

Mr. PEERS: "Investigation" refers to my trip on my own, because I did not want to be advised not to come. That is the trip I made to Ottawa; the queries which I directed to Mr. Walker; the attempts to see Mr. Bushnell; and then, finally, our meeting with Mr. Bushnell on that Sunday night in Toronto.

Mr. CHAMBERS: In other words, your "investigation" is what you report in your statement?

Mr. PEERS: That is right.

Mr. CHAMBERS: Would you agree, the question of whether parliament should be reported by a commentary or by wire news compendium is a matter of opinion?

Mr. PEERS: It is a program decision for which there can be pros and cons on each side.

Mr. CHAMBERS: In other words, there is something to be said for either side.

In your view, when the C.B.C. is faced with a question as to whether do a thing in one way or another, whose decision is it as to which way it should be done?

Mr. PEERS: It is a decision, finally, of management.

Mr. CHAMBERS: The three witnesses before us are the three who resigned and gave out a statement to the press which has been reported as the reasons for their resignation, is that correct?

Mr. PEERS: Yes.

Mr. CHAMBERS: The three witnesses here—apart from what has been said in your statement and in the answers to questions—have not of themselves any proof this was a management decision taken under political influence and pressure? I would like to stress the word proof. You obviously believed it was necessary; but have you any witnesses to prove that it was?

Mr. PEERS: Again, I am not a lawyer, but I think we thought that beyond reasonable doubt there was a likelihood.

Mr. CHAMBERS: But you three gentlemen, beyond what you have said—can you adduce any further proof?

Mr. PEERS: I think that what can be regarded as proof would depend on the judgment of reasonable men who were reviewing it.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you consider this group to be reasonable men?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Let us wait and see.

Mr. PEERS: I think so.

Mr. MCCLEAVE: I have a few questions I would like to ask this witness. This statement, I presume, has been drawn up by the three witnesses who are here this morning. Is that correct?



Mr. PEERS: That is so. It was primarily my own, but I showed it to them at each point, and they quite concurred in the basic parts of it.

Mr. McCLEAVE: It is a joint summing-up to the best of your recollection.

Mr. PEERS: That is right.

Mr. McCLEAVE: What bothers me particularly is that when you went through page 3 regarding the conversation around midnight on that Wednesday night you used the phrase that Mr. Walker apparently told you. You used the word "apparently", although it is not included in your statement. Do you recall using that word?

Mr. PEERS: No, I do not recall it. I would like to know the context.

Mr. McCLEAVE: That was in answer to a question asked by the chairman.

Mr. PEERS: I cannot comment because I do not remember the statement.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, we shall have to adjourn now because the house meets at 11 a.m. We shall reconvene at three o'clock in this room. Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): Is it the intention to call Mr. Walker?

The CHAIRMAN: We shall consider that in the steering committee.

#### AFTERNOON SESSION

TUESDAY, June 30, 1959.  
3:00 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: It is three o'clock, gentlemen. We will come to order.

After the session broke up this morning the steering committee had a meeting at which it was decided we would call Mr. Walker because he had been mentioned so often in the evidence of Mr. Peers, Mr. Gillis and Mr. Trotter. I understand Mr. Walker is here. I would suggest to the committee members that the questioning, as far as the three present witnesses are concerned, is practically concluded.

I think it might be advisable if we would ask Mr. Walker to come up here now.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): Mr. Chairman, may I ask one question. I would like to complete the record. Earlier this morning Mr. Peers on a question from myself indicated there had been another occasion on which he had resented the action taken by management and emphasized his protest by a threat to resign. I think he indicated this was three years ago at the time Mr. Dunton was president of the corporation. I would like to ask Mr. Peers if there had been any other occasion. You mentioned the one. Has there been any other, perhaps, on which you would like to refresh your memory?

Mr. PEERS: First of all, in respect of the other occasion I mentioned I should say then it was not an ultimatum that I would resign. I went to Ottawa again because I found it difficult to discuss these things over the telephone. I had a long discussion with the general manager and, after a hard give and take, management decided to change its stand. The question of resigning did not formally come up although they understood that in the circumstances I felt it was an important enough issue at the time to suggest I would have no recourse but to leave the corporation.

However, in effect, this issue was voiced on the network from that time on.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): This morning I asked if there was any other situation in which you threatened. You gave one other example and you are now taking the position that this was not to the point of resigning.



Mr. PEERS: I never suggested at another time that I would resign.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): May I ask the circumstances in respect of interviewing certain persons who were the authors of a book concerning the former prime minister, and if there was any serious disagreement between yourself and the corporation as to whether or not the individuals should appear and whether you threatened to resign on that occasion.

Mr. PEERS: There was some disagreement between myself and the senior officials of the corporation. The discussion was carried on on the grounds of the merits of the particular program. I did not indicate that I would regard a reversal as a serious—

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): Every time you disagree with management you do not, then, just threaten to resign? You are not trying to control management policy?

Mr. PEERS: As I said this morning, there are many times when my judgment is questioned, is not accepted as final; and I take that in good grace if I think we are meeting each other on the same kind of program grounds.

Mr. McINTOSH: As a basis for my questioning and to put on the record the reasons why these gentlemen are here today, I would like to refer to the evidence of the committee of June 24. One committee member said he had a motion to present to the committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you please stand up, Mr. McIntosh? We are having difficulty in hearing you.

Mr. McINTOSH: As a preface for my questioning and in order to put on record why these three were called to this meeting today, I wish to make reference to the evidence of the committee meeting of June 24, wherein one committee member said that he wanted to make a motion to invite these three gentlemen to appear at the next meeting of the committee to substantiate their charge that clandestine political influence has been brought to bear on C.B.C. management. Through this proforma we have been given this morning by these three gentlemen, reference has been made to interference, influence and connection. I would like to ask Mr. Peers—and I think he has stated it before—that there was no political motivation in his charge. Is that correct?

Mr. PEERS: There is no political motivation in my charge.

Mr. McINTOSH: And no political interference?

Mr. PEERS: I am confusing two things. I thought you were asking did I have a political motivation; that is, did I intend to help one party or another by making a certain charge. My answer to this is, no. I take it now your question is in connection with something else.

Mr. McINTOSH: I will go further into the evidence of the twenty-fourth. One committee member said that the charges of illegal interference had been levied and as such they are reflecting on the dignity of members of parliament. Following that up they also said—

The CHAIRMAN: Who were “they”?

Mr. McINTOSH: They were speaking, I presume, about the three gentlemen appearing as witnesses.

The CHAIRMAN: These are committee members?

Mr. McINTOSH: I am referring to the minutes of the twenty-fourth.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: If we are going to have the minutes referred to I think they should be read accurately.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. What page are you on?



Mr. McINTOSH: Page 501, about half way down. Mr. McCleave said:

Mr. Chairman, on Mr. McIntosh's point, surely the basis is that this little group has charged political interference? As such, they are reflecting on the dignity of members of parliament—and that, to me, is the important consideration. Undoubtedly they are going to have a fight with their own management of the C.B.C.; but I think the important point is that they have brought charges against people here in Ottawa on Parliament Hill.

Then I interjected. I said:

Whereabouts? They did not say anything about that.

Then Mr. McCleave said:

They talked about clandestine political interference.

You, Mr. Chairman, said:

But did they say, "within the corporation" or "from Parliament Hill"—that is the point?

Mr. McCleave said:

I think people would take the ordinary meaning from what "political" means.

Then Mr. Smith said:

The interference is pretty clear.

What does Mr. Peers mean by interference or influence? Does he mean criticism?

Mr. PEERS: As I mentioned this morning, the word I had used was influence and not interference. Indeed, that is the way in which the telegram which invited me to this hearing reads. It said: to appear before this committee at the earliest possible time to give evidence concerning the charges "that clandestine political influence has been brought to bear on the C.B.C. management".

As I explained this morning, I do not make a charge that interference had taken place. I did make the assertion that there was influence in the sense that the C.B.C. itself recognized some external pressure. Also as I said this morning—I have no objective evidence that that influence in fact existed. All I know is that the C.B.C. interpreted it in that way. That is my criticism.

The CHAIRMAN: Who do you mean by the C.B.C.?

Mr. McINTOSH: I am referring now to page 6—

The CHAIRMAN: Just a moment, Mr. McIntosh. Who do you mean by the C.B.C.?

Mr. PEERS: I mean the C.B.C.'s management.

Mr. McINTOSH: I am now referring to the top of page 6 where you say:

Mr. Bushnell said he had received criticisms from three sources:

- (1) by word of mouth from private citizens—friends, acquaintances, etc.;
- (2) from people in responsible positions, businessmen, etc.; and
- (3) from politicians.

Now, there, do you mean criticism or interference?

Mr. PEERS: Of course, these are Mr. Bushnell's explanations to a group of us who were meeting with him, and I think he meant criticism and certainly not interference.

Mr. McINTOSH: I now refer you to the letter which you sent to the Toronto senior group, on page 5.

Mr. PEERS: From the Toronto senior group.

Mr. McINTOSH: Well, it is signed by you.



Mr. PEERS: It was signed by eight people of whom I am one.

Mr. McINTOSH: In the second paragraph you say:

Because we believe that the principle of freedom from political or other interference, or the appearance of such interference, is absolutely essential to the effective discharge of the corporation's program responsibilities...

Is it your contention that the public is no longer able to have the freedom to criticize your program?

Mr. PEERS: No. I think the meaning there is that it has been an established principle with the C.B.C. and before it, when the C.R.B.C. was founded that the corporation should not take instructions from any political group or government, but should be responsible through its board to parliament. Now, the meaning of this—

Mr. McINTOSH: Before you continue, Mr. Peers, what do you mean by political group?

Mr. PEERS: I mean political party. I should have explained more precisely.

The meaning of this particular sentence which you have quoted from the letter, to which I was one of the signatories, is that not only must there be freedom from actual interference which is often hard to assert with certainty, but C.B.C. program decisions should be made in an atmosphere when there could be no reasonable assumption that it was a political influence or interference that brought about the decision; in other words, the discussion on program matters should be carried on in the usual way of assessing the worthwhileness or otherwise of the particular program.

Mr. McINTOSH: By political interference you mean political party interference?

Mr. PEERS: Not necessarily. I think interference—and I am not saying for a moment that there was interference—but interference could theoretically be from anyone who has any kind of power, real or imaginative, in the minds of the C.B.C. management.

Mr. McINTOSH: Referring to those who criticize, could they not have a political affiliation with anyone?

Mr. PEERS: Yes, it would be some public identification with a political group.

Mr. McINTOSH: I would like to refer back to the last paragraph on the first page:

This sudden cancellation of a series without prior consultation with the responsible program department was unprecedented in my twelve years' experience with the C.B.C.

Now, is that prior consultation unusual?

Mr. PEERS: What is unusual, sir, is that a whole series of programs should be cancelled without some discussion between either a responsible program department or a network programming group and management; that is unusual.

Mr. McINTOSH: In some other series of programs how much time is given to discussions?

Mr. PEERS: I would have to rely there upon programs in my own department only and I do not know the situation entirely in all other program areas, but I should think in my own department I cannot remember a program being cancelled with less than the usual publicity time, which is three weeks—usually three or four weeks as a rule.

Mr. McINTOSH: How long have you held your present position?

Mr. PEERS: I have been supervisor since the beginning of 1954; I was assistant supervisor for a short time before that.



Mr. McINTOSH: After answering Mr. Smith's remarks about this being unprecedented in your twelve years' experience, you would say on one other occasion you admitted it did happen.

Mr. PEERS: That was not a series. That was an individual program and there the decision was taken to cancel the individual program, but after further discussion and reflection the program went ahead.

Mr. McINTOSH: Whether it was a series of programs or one, it did happen before?

Mr. PEERS: No. It possibly could have happened, but did not.

Mr. McINTOSH: Well, did it not happen in 1955 on one occasion when a political program was cancelled?

Mr. PEERS: I do not recall it; perhaps you could refresh my memory.

Mr. McINTOSH: Dr. Bernard Ostry.

Mr. PEERS: That was a proposed program.

Mr. McINTOSH: How about 1956, concerning a man by the name of Conway, who was involved?

Mr. PEERS: He gave two talks and they went ahead.

Mr. McINTOSH: Did you receive an objection to those talks at that time?

Mr. PEERS: No word that there was any criticism of the talks came to me until months later. I knew for some reason or another the C.B.C. board of governors were reviewing the scripts at one stage. I did not know there was any important objection to the two talks until some months later when it came out in the House of Commons debates.

Mr. McINTOSH: I would like to ask a question concerning the second paragraph on page 8, which states:

The board of directors met during the day, but did not call on any of us. In the evening I received word from Mr. Hallman that Dr. Morton had informed him that he had failed completely in getting a full discussion. He said that the board had confirmed the decision of management to cancel Preview Commentary.

Was it after you received that decision that you put in your resignation?

Mr. PEERS: Yes, it was several hours after that.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. McGrath, before you start your questioning, might I suggest to each member of the committee that this gentleman will remain here and I feel that inasmuch as we called Mr. Walker we should hear him as soon as possible. Now, your question, Mr. McGrath.

Mr. FISHER: Just on a point of information, Mr. Chairman: you said Mr. Walker; I understood the steering committee recommended Mr. Walker, Mr. Hallman and Mr. Hogg.

The CHAIRMAN: My understanding of it—and possibly Mr. Pickersgill can advise me if I am wrong—was Mr. Walker and Mr. Hallman.

Mr. McGRATH: My question is brief and part of it was answered during the time of Mr. McIntosh's questioning. It arises out of the third paragraph on page 6 of Mr. Peers' statement:

Mr. Bushnell replied that Preview Commentary was not being cancelled; that this was simply an experiment with a different form of program to cover parliamentary affairs. He said that the parliamentary session would last only a few more weeks, and asked why we should not try this other format.

My question is this: as an experienced radio man, would you not accept this as a logical explanation of a change made in the interests of good programming?



Mr. PICKERSGILL: I would like to raise a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order, Mr. Pickersgill?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Chairman, we are here to ascertain facts and what is being asked here now is whether or not something is logical. What we want to know is whether it is true or not.

The CHAIRMAN: We have been working on opinions all day. Could you change your question a wee bit, Mr. McGrath?

Mr. McGRATH: In the normal affairs of programming, are changes made under similar circumstances?

Mr. PEERS: This morning I suggested there are arguments pro and con for each program format attempting to carry out its responsibility in different ways, and I think that such a discussion would be a worthwhile one; and we had a discussion along those lines that evening.

I should also report that those who were there felt that the weight of opinion was with maintaining Preview Commentary, and that included, I think, in that evening, the chief news editor, in whose department the other kind of program would fit.

Mr. McGRATH: I have one other question and it concerns an interview in the Toronto Star of June 24.

The CHAIRMAN: An interview by whom and with whom?

Mr. McGRATH: It is with Mr. Peers and his colleagues, by Mr. Templeton and Mr. Cohen. My question is: Mr. Peers is speaking, and he says, in part:

The present board is, I'm sure, trying to do its best but the peculiar thing is that its information must come through management. It's an extraordinary feature of the legislation under which we are now operating.

Is this not normal, for a board of directors of a corporation to get its information through management? I would suggest that it is.

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Chairman, I am not sure that my experience is broad enough to venture an opinion with certainty, but I think in very many corporations there is a chairman of the board, and there is also a general manager, who is separate—sometimes a president who is separate; but certainly, as a rule, a general manager who is separate.

The CHAIRMAN: I would suggest we are just veering a little away from the motion.

Mr. FISHER: I wanted to ask a question in connection with the same interview, and it was your statement—

The CHAIRMAN: It is on the motion, is it?

Mr. FISHER: Yes.

There have been other direct statements to us of the nature of the political pressures but since other people in the corporation are still working within the framework of the corporation to develop the kind of machinery which will more successfully resist such pressures, I'm not at liberty to give you details at the moment.

My question is: is this situation still existing, and is it reflected in your statement?

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Fisher, I have given the details in my statements this morning that I refused to give The Star interviewers.

Mr. FISHER: Fine.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, may I have your permission to excuse these three witnesses and call Mr. H. G. Walker?



Mr. MUIR (*Lisgar*): I would like to ask Mr. Peers a question. Mr. Peers has spoken of alleged pressure on management in connection with this program, and in view of the fact that the evidence so far submitted has been based on hearsay, would he not consider the action taken by himself and some of his colleagues as pressure on the management?

Mr. PEERS: Mr. Muir, on the alleged pressure—as I said this morning—I had to rely upon my superior officer, who was the link—my link—with management. On the business of pressure from this group of three, I think that resignation—sudden resignation—is a form of pressure vying with all the other pressures that exist around a contentious situation; but it did not seem to me that it was the kind of pressure which was not recognized immediately by the public for what it was. In other words, it was a pressure honestly and—I hope—sincerely exerted.

Mr. MUIR (*Lisgar*): Could I ask a supplementary question? Then, Mr. Peers, would you and your associates—

The CHAIRMAN: Would you speak louder, please, so that these witnesses can hear.

Mr. MUIR (*Lisgar*): I am asking Mr. Peers if he and his associates would deny the right of management to make and carry out decisions solely within the conscience and responsibility of management itself—by your actions?

Mr. PEERS: No, I would not deny that. But at the same time, it seems to me that a responsible officer of a corporation has it also within his rights to dissociate himself from the fact by publicly withdrawing from it.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: We live in a free country.

Mr. TAYLOR: On page 3 of Mr. Peers' statement there appears:

Mr. Walker said that he was not at liberty to divulge further information but that external pressures were involved.

My question is this: who asked for information at this time while you were present with your colleagues? Were you asking for information and particulars about outside pressures?

Mr. PEERS: Sir, I think that we were asking about the nature of the emergency—there seemed to be an emergency—which brought this program decision to a head in such a short time. I do not think we ever asked for the names or identities of persons who may have been involved, and I think Mr. Walker, in just telling us how far he could go and how far he could not go, drew that line himself. That is the best of my recollection; but perhaps you would like to ask the same question of my colleagues, whose memories may be different from mine, for all I know.

Mr. TAYLOR: I take it you were in the room with Mr. Walker and your colleagues?

Mr. PEERS: That is right.

Mr. TAYLOR: And there was a discussion. How long was that discussion about this particular statement? Was there any discussion, apart from one bald statement that there were political pressures?

Mr. PEERS: I think that this particular part of our discussion may have lasted five or six minutes.

Mr. TAYLOR: Can you tell us what was discussed, then, during the five or six minutes?

Mr. PEERS: For one thing, we made the point that we were much more concerned with the corporation's procedure and method of appraising the program than we were with the identity of the people who had allegedly expressed views about the program.



Mr. TAYLOR: One final question. I take it the discussion was of about five minutes in duration; that there was one statement made which concerned you most, but none of you asked for further particulars about the statement of political pressure?

Mr. PEERS: I remember distinctly breaking in to say I would not ask for such information. This was aside from Mr. Walker telling me he was not at liberty to give such information.

The CHAIRMAN: May I now have your permission in this regard, gentlemen: the three witnesses could be excused right now, if they would like to sit down there, almost any place. Mr. H. G. Walker, please.

Gentlemen, may I introduce Mr. H. G. Walker, who is director for Ontario and the English network. Mr. Walker, would you tell the committee exactly what your duties are.

Mr. H. G. WALKER (*Director and Coordinator of English Language Networks, Ontario Division, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*): I am director for the province of Ontario division of the corporation and coordinator of the English language networks.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): Mr. Chairman, may we have Mr. Walker speak louder, please?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes; could you speak a little louder, Mr. Walker, please?

Mr. WALKER: My title is director for the Ontario division and coordinator of the English language networks, which is radio and television.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have a short statement you would like to make, Mr. Walker?

Mr. WALKER: I would like the permission of the chair—because my name has been included in the statement of Mr. Peers which I understand was read this morning—to read from some informal notes which I have written in this notebook, solely in the interests of possibly being a more useful witness in the event of my being called before the committee—and, of course, I have been called.

May I have your permission, Mr. Chairman? I should like to simply read through these—which I want identified as informal notes—which help me to recall, in all honesty, the events as I recall them over the last number of rather difficult days.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish you would do that, please. Carry on, Mr. Walker, please.

Mr. WALKER: Again, I should like to make very clear that these are informal notes in my own handwriting, and having said that, I will find some difficulty in reading some of it. I will do my best.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you also talk slowly, please, for the reporter.

Mr. WALKER: June 15: Mr. Nixon—Mr. Nixon is assistant director of radio networks, English language—advised me of direction from Mr. Jennings to drop Preview Commentary. Same day, in the afternoon: I tried to reach Mr. Jennings by phone, but he was unavailable. I was seeking information on the cancellation.

June 15; same day: I teletyped Mr. Jennings, with a copy to Mr. Bushnell, protesting the dropping of Preview Commentary, on the basis of timing, if nothing else, having no further information.

June 16: Mr. Bushnell phoned to say—and in fairness, I am not too certain of the quotes, but I will do my best to recall them—quote—I guess you think we are all crazy here—unquote—because of the dropping of Preview Commentary, but he advised me there were important reasons for the decision which he would explain when I was in Ottawa.

June 17: Arrived in Ottawa near noon hour. Mr. Bushnell informed me that too many scripts in Preview Commentary series have had special slant or



bias, and he left the impression with me—underline “impression”—that there have been important protests, but no names were mentioned. I asked if decision could be deferred until the end of the present session of parliament. The answer was “No”.

June 17—same day: After above meeting with Mr. Bushnell I saw Mr. Jennings, who also gave me impression there were important protests about Preview Commentary. Mr. Jennings asked me to read a teletype he was sending to Toronto, ordering the replacing of Preview Commentary with Parliamentary Report, as of June 22.

Same date, June 17, rather late: I was advised that Mr. Peers, Mr. Gillis and Mr. Trotter were on their way from Toronto to see me, in the hope, I was advised, I would be able to give more information on the cancellation of Preview Commentary. Before their arrival I phoned Mr. Jennings at his home, urging him to give me real background. He advised me that situation was so serious that, quote—heads were to roll, unquote, if we did not remove Preview Commentary by June 22. In fact, it was to have been dropped the week previous. Specific heads mentioned were, Mr. Bushnell and Mr. Nowlan.

Same date, very late at night—

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I think we should have a recess for the press.

The VICE CHAIRMAN: Continue. Order, gentlemen. Please continue, Mr. Walker.

Mr. FISHER: Would you repeat that?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I trust the press.

The VICE CHAIRMAN: I take it you heard it, Mr. Fisher?

Mr. FISHER: I did not hear it.

Mr. ROBICHAUD: Would you repeat the last question?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I wonder if we could have that last sentence repeated, because there were some members who did not hear it.

Mr. JOHNSON: Do you want it amplified on a tape recording?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I wonder if we could have silence so the witness can be allowed to repeat it, because many of us did not hear it.

The VICE CHAIRMAN: You can repeat it; there is no objection.

Mr. WALKER: Specific heads mentioned were Mr. Bushnell and Mr. Nowlan.

The VICE CHAIRMAN: Is that clear enough? Continue.

Mr. WALKER: Same date—I do not know what hour; rather late: I endeavoured to relay management's—Mr. Bushnell's position—to Mr. Peers, Mr. Gillis and Mr. Trotter, informing them, as I had been informed, that some of the Preview Commentary scripts had been offensive to certain people; and that it would appear that Mr. Bushnell, in his wisdom, had made a decision on his own in view of what seemed to be threats to the upper structure of the corporation.

Mr. Peers, Mr. Gillis and Mr. Trotter left me—that is, left my room—giving me the impression they had added up the information I had given them, and that Mr. Jennings previously had given them, as signs of some kind of serious outside interference; and that after consideration, they—that is, Mr. Peers, Mr. Gillis and Mr. Trotter—probably would regard the decision to drop Preview Commentary as unacceptable to them. I have in brackets here—“meaning their resignations.”

June 20, one o'clock: A group of senior Toronto officers asked me to join them in a special meeting to discuss the situation. They were now unanimous in pressing for more information. In the interests of the integrity of the corporation and—I honestly felt at that time and continue to feel—also in the interests of Mr. Bushnell, I did not feel bound to withhold the information



I had, and had to agree with them—that is, the senior officers reporting to me—that basic principles seemed to be involved, and I also agreed we must try to have a reversal of decision so that, if nothing else, the public and the press would not misunderstand.

June 21, two o'clock: Second meeting with senior officers was held, out of which came a prepared signed statement by the officers who met with me, to be delivered through me to Mr. Bushnell. The statement recognized—if I may interject here, I understand it was read during the meeting this morning.

The VICE CHAIRMAN: That is right.

Mr. WALKER: The statement recognized the rights of management, but questioned the decision in this case because of the appearance of—quote—external pressure—unquote.

Continuing June 21: I read the statement to Mr. Bushnell, and he agreed to meet with the group at 7:30 that night. Meeting turned out to be unfortunate because in trying to convince Mr. Bushnell the decision was wrong, in the opinion of the officers reporting to me, Mr. Bushnell strongly objected to the statement that had been prepared, to some of the questioning, and to certain of the people in attendance.

Same date: Mr. Bushnell talked to me in the privacy of my office—just a moment.

The VICE CHAIRMAN: Take your time.

Mr. WALKER: And informed me there was no possibility of reversal of decision, and he must go along with it or his job might be in jeopardy. I said, "In the circumstances, I doubt it"—that this could be possible.

June 22: A representative group of senior officers urged me to seek the advice of the president. I felt obliged to inform him of the serious situation which seemed to be developing in Toronto. I therefore phoned the president and urged him to phone Mr. Bushnell for background. It was quite apparent to me, in talking to the president, that this was the first that he had heard of this situation, which I identified as serious.

The next date is June 23, 2:45 a.m.: I was advised at home that resignations of senior talks people and possibly others would be handed in to me first thing in the morning.

The same date, June 23, Mr. Bushnell and others were kept informed of the resignations as they were handed in to me. Mr. Bushnell again advised me in the privacy of my office that the decision could not be changed. Mr. Bushnell also advised me that our board had been fully informed.

June 23, at approximately 5.30 p.m. Mr. Bushnell returned a phone call to our president at his home in the presence of myself and Mr. Jennings, from the Celebrity Club in Toronto, and informed the president that the decision was necessary, otherwise he and the president might both be removed from their jobs.

The CHAIRMAN: While you are gathering your thoughts, when Mr. Bushnell phoned from the Celebrity Club, that was the date that the committee was in Toronto?

Mr. WALKER: That is right.

June 24, in the morning: Mr. Jennings, Mr. Peter McDonald, director of our English language TV network, Mr. Hallman and myself were called before the special meeting of our board. Mr. Hallman acted as spokesman because his network responsibilities were directly affected.

Mr. Jennings advised us later that following this meeting, he was detained in the meeting after we left to fully inform the board of the situation. He said some members of our board have learned full details of the decision for the first time, or of the background for the decision for the first time.



That is all I have, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): Were there any names at any time mentioned of any political figure or person of political connection who was bringing the pressure to bear?

Mr. WALKER: Not in my presence.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): At no time was any name mentioned in any of the conversations at which you were present?

Mr. WALKER: Not in my honest recollection.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): So that at all times you were operating on the basis of surmise and inference from what was said?

Mr. WALKER: I would choose to call it—you may be correct in identifying it that way—but I would choose to call it logic, by virtue of the fact that the corporation is in no position, obviously, to relieve Mr. Nowlan, of his position; and if I may continue, nor, as I understand it, is our president, who also presides over our board, nor the board itself in a position to relieve the vice president of his duties.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): What inference do you get from that statement?

Mr. WALKER: No inference at all. By logic I felt—and I imagine that our other senior officers felt that probably there must have been some kind of influence.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): Did you ever ask Mr. Bushnell, Mr. Ouimet, or Mr. Jennings from whom this alleged pressure was coming?

Mr. WALKER: No sir.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): Why not?

Mr. WALKER: I cannot answer. I do not know why. I did not feel there was any reason for my asking. I had been advised of what I chose to regard as a serious situation, and for reasons that I have recounted in my informal notes, I felt, in the interest of the corporation, I would pass it on to my senior officials. That was as far as I could go.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): You are on a basis of intimacy with Mr. Jennings and Mr. Bushnell?

Mr. WALKER: Indeed so.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): Therefore there would be no reason why you would not ask a question of that sort, and if you did so, it would not be considered as impertinent coming from you?

Mr. WALKER: Not at all.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): Have you any further reason to advance why you did not ask the question directly to either, as to who was the person involved?

Mr. WALKER: No sir; I had no reason to.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): You indicated that Mr. Bushnell told you that his head—I am sorry, Mr. Jennings told you that his head and that of Mr. Nowlan would roll, and that if Mr. Nowlan's head was to roll, presumably you never thought at any time that Mr. Nowlan was the political figure who was associated with these alleged influences?

Mr. WALKER: Not to my recollection no.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): So, in your mind at all times you would absolve Mr. Nowlan?

Mr. WALKER: Yes, I think I would.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): As to these impressions which you left, or which were left with you, first, on the 17th, when Mr. Bushnell spoke to you about these scripts, you said—I think your exact language was:



He left the impression that important protests had been made?

Would you please tell me the exact language that Mr. Bushnell used which conveyed that impression to your mind?

Mr. WALKER: I am sorry but I cannot recall the exact language. I think, if you will permit me to say so, that it is rather a difficult thing to do, to recall the exact language or the words used, when the event is now certainly a week old. I do not think I would like to attempt to guess at the exact words or the exact language.

As I have said, there was an impression created which led me to believe that there were important criticisms.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): Important criticisms? Would you try to give the committee, Mr. Walker, the closest you can recollect it, the language which was used by Mr. Bushnell on that occasion? I say to you frankly that I intend to test this by asking the same question of Mr. Bushnell on another occasion. I want to say that in fairness to you.

Mr. WALKER: I cannot add very much more to the notes which I have read associated with that particular date of my talk with Mr. Bushnell. There was a brief chat, extremely brief. It happened to be at the noon hour when I had just arrived. Mr. Bushnell was extremely busy. It was the briefest of chats in his office. And if I can recall anything, without using the exact words, he spent most of the time telling me that too many of the scripts had been slanted and had bias in them. I think that was about the extent of the discussion.

Mr. FISHER: Mr. Chairman, I have a question supplementary to that. You said you asked Mr. Bushnell to defer the decision, did you not?

Mr. WALKER: Yes.

Mr. FISHER: What did you have in mind?

Mr. WALKER: I had in mind that this was a bad decision. I must say this; and that with deferment perhaps we could understand a little better his reasoning in arriving at such a decision. I was also very conscious that in dropping this series of programs so quickly that perhaps—in my opinion anyway—the decision would be misunderstood by the public and most certainly misunderstood by the press.

The CHAIRMAN: Is your question another supplementary question, Mr. Fisher?

Mr. FISHER: It is on the same point. When you asked him if he would defer the decision was his negative answer immediate?

Mr. WALKER: A matter of seconds, I should say; yes.

Mr. FISHER: Later on the same day when Mr. Peers was asking you about it, you saw Mr. Jennings and again you said you had the impression from him an important protest had been made. Did you get exactly the same impression from Mr. Jennings that you got from Mr. Bushnell in so far as the type of person was concerned who made the protest, that is a very important person.

Mr. WALKER: I got a stronger impression, if I may say this, simply because Mr. Jennings seemed to be very disturbed, particularly disturbed that he was having to send this teletype, to which I have referred here, very clearly and very definitely directing that the Preview Commentary series be dropped. He seemed to be very disturbed. This gave me a very strong impression, as I did not have any other intimation, that surely there must be some kind of outside interference. This is the impression it gave me.

Mr. FISHER: Later on, when you telephoned Mr. Jennings you got this expression "heads were to roll". Are you certain that is the expression?



Mr. WALKER: If you will allow for the failings of an ordinary human—and I choose to regard myself as reasonably normal—it is difficult, especially in a situation that is very worrisome as this was to me, and many other officers, to recall. Personally, to the best of my honest recollection—and I have my notes here and I put this in quotes—he did say heads would roll, to the best of my recollection.

Mr. FISHER: He also told you at this time that in fact the program should have ended a week sooner?

Mr. WALKER: Yes. I think he endeavoured to convey to me that it was so important that in fact the direction, or decision, to drop the thing was intended to apply a week previous. What had delayed it I have no knowledge.

Mr. FISHER: I have one last question. I would like you to repeat that you heard from him that the specific heads that were to roll were Mr. Bushnell and Mr. Nowlan.

Mr. WALKER: Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR: When were your notes in that book prepared? Were they made to refresh your memory today, or were they prepared in diary form from day to day?

Mr. WALKER: I would say a combination of both, sir. I would say, in the main, my notes were made last night, but I had many notes accumulated from the date of June 15.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you ordinarily take notes of all conversations?

Mr. WALKER: No, I do not.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): I was going to question the witness more, but I do not think I will do so any further.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions of the witness?

Mr. CHAMBERS: I would like to make a motion that the witness now be excused and that we call Mr. Jennings.

Agreed.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Walker. Mr. Jennings, please. It is not necessary to re-introduce Mr. Jennings. You all know him. Have you a statement, Mr. Jennings?

Mr. CHARLES JENNINGS (*Controller of Broadcasting*): Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I have a statement which I wrote last Sunday.

On Thursday, June 11, I was instructed by Mr. Bushnell that the program Preview Commentary was to terminate as of Friday, the following week, June 19. I was told at that time I would be given an explanation shortly. Later, the explanation was given to me that both the president and acting president would lose their jobs if the program was not terminated and that the position of the minister would be in jeopardy, and that there could be no change in the decision.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you take it a little more slowly?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Perhaps the right word would be dictation speed.

Mr. JENNINGS: In the light of our traditional policy of independence I protested what I felt would be the results of such an action and asked for an opportunity to consider a formula which might lessen the impact of the cancellation directive which I was advised was irrevocable. I submitted this in a statement that afternoon and was told that it was acceptable. This is the statement which Mr. Peers filed this morning with his statement.

On Monday, June 15, I saw Frank Peers in Ottawa, having arranged for him to come up on another matter. I opened my meeting by showing him the statement which had been prepared. He was upset and wanted to see the acting president. This was impossible because of various other matters which



Mr. Bushnell had to deal with at that time in connection with the parliamentary committee which was sitting the following morning.

Peers returned to Toronto on Monday night and, I presume, began to have discussions with his staff which culminated in Peers, Gillis and Trotter coming up to Ottawa by air late Wednesday night for a meeting with Mr. H. G. Walker, the director of the English network division, who was in Ottawa in connection with other matters.

Earlier on that Wednesday evening Mr. Walker telephoned me at my home to tell me there was great consternation amongst the talks staff in Toronto and to give me the information that these persons were coming to Ottawa. He begged me to give him some indication of the background to the decision, and I did so. I understand he met with Peers, Trotter and Gillis very late in his hotel room that same evening.

On Thursday morning June 18, Peers, Gillis and Trotter were still in Ottawa, but Mr. Bushnell was ill which prevented his attending the meeting of the parliamentary committee. When Peers, Trotter and Gillis returned to Toronto, I do not know, but it was impossible for Mr. Bushnell to see them while they were in Ottawa. While he had made every effort to come into the office, he was able to see no one except Mr. Dunsmore and myself, and we finally managed to get him to return to his summer home up the Gatineau.

On several occasions during the span between Thursday, June 11 and the following Wednesday, June 17, I had conversations with Mr. Bushnell in which we discussed the possibilities which might result from the implementation of the new program, Parliamentary Report, and I was told that under no circumstances could the decision be reversed. I had prepared a teletype directive some time on Monday or Tuesday and this was sent on Wednesday, the seventeenth.

The CHAIRMAN: Is there anything you want to add, Mr. Jennings, before Mr. Lambert asks his question.

Mr. LAMBERT: I would like to consider this first, Mr. Chairman, before I ask any questions.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chambers, do you wish to ask a question?

Mr. CHAMBERS: I wanted to clarify a couple of points, particularly in regard to the beginning, where you were going fast. What date again were you instructed to cancel the program?

Mr. JENNINGS: Thursday, June 11.

Mr. CHAMBERS: And you were told an explanation would be coming later?

Mr. JENNINGS: Shortly, I said.

Mr. CHAMBERS: And when did this explanation come?

Mr. JENNINGS: About an hour later. The explanation was not given to me at that time because Mr. Bushnell was awaiting an appointment. He was outside his door.

Mr. CHAMBERS: What time of day was all this?

Mr. JENNINGS: I think around 12 o'clock roughly.

Mr. FISHER: You heard the statements made by Mr. Walker with regard to your telephone conversation in which he remembers you made a remark—quote—heads were to fall—unquote, and went on to indicate that would include Mr. Bushnell and Mr. Nowlan. Is it correct that in your view you gave him that impression?

Mr. JENNINGS: I certainly gave him that information, but I do not recognize that as a kind of expression I would use.



Mr. FISHER: Where did you get the information that Mr. Nowlan was involved with someone whose position was in jeopardy; was that from Mr. Bushnell?

Mr. JENNINGS: I am sorry; I think I made that clear in my opening remark. But I was instructed that the program Preview Commentary was to terminate, and so on. This was Mr. Bushnell; and later the explanation was given to me by Mr. Bushnell, and so on.

Mr. FISHER: Could I ask the same question that Mr. Bell was asking Mr. Walker. Did you question this at all and question the source of the pressure?

Mr. JENNINGS: At no time did Mr. Bushnell disclose or tell me the source which compelled him to take this action.

Mr. FISHER: Well, why did you not persist in trying to find out what the source of pressure was?

Mr. JENNINGS: Again, I do not know that I can answer that, Mr. Fisher. I had been given the information. It was quite a shock to me and I think I went away and tried to prepare this formula of which I spoke.

Mr. FISHER: You did not at any time disbelieve the statement?

Mr. JENNINGS: I will say that I wondered if I was hearing my own ears at first.

Mr. LAMBERT: Was any name or names ever given to you?

Mr. JENNINGS: No.

Mr. LAMBERT: Did you ever ask for any names?

Mr. JENNINGS: No, I did not.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I have a supplementary question.

Mr. LAMBERT: Did you ask for an explanation of such a statement after you found it, as you say, rather strange?

Mr. JENNINGS: Not that I recall, Mr. Lambert. It was all rather a very strained time.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I have a supplementary question.

The CHAIRMAN: Proceed.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Jennings, did you consider that to have asked a question as to the source of the information would be redundant?

The CHAIRMAN: Would you repeat your question, Mr. Pickersgill.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I asked him if he felt that to ask Mr. Bushnell for the source of the directive would be redundant.

Mr. JENNINGS: No, I did not think of that specifically; I am sorry, Mr. Pickersgill.

Mr. TAYLOR: I just wanted to go back to June 15. Mr. Peers had come to Ottawa for a specific purpose.

Mr. JENNINGS: Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR: And you then told him there was to be a change?

Mr. JENNINGS: Yes, I gave him a statement.

Mr. TAYLOR: Did you tell him then there was political interference?

Mr. JENNINGS: No, I did not.

Mr. TAYLOR: Well now, here was management making a decision to remove a program—

Mr. JENNINGS: Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR: Why would Mr. Peers run back to Toronto and get all these people together when an order had been given from management? If there



was no interference at that time, why would he cause that turmoil at that moment?

Mr. JENNINGS: I would think because he disagreed so completely with the logic of the decision that he would go back and discuss it with his people, as I assumed, in my statement.

Mr. TAYLOR: And at a later date he then found out through you and Mr. Walker that there was some political interference?

Mr. JENNINGS: Not through me.

Mr. TAYLOR: Through Mr. Walker?

The CHAIRMAN: The question was asked did he find out through you or Mr. Walker.

Mr. JENNINGS: I had no conversation with Mr. Peers following the meeting on Monday, June 15, and he referred to that in his statement this morning.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Jennings, Mr. Peers did tell us this morning that on two or three occasions he communicated with you while he was in Ottawa, with a view to having a meeting with Mr. Bushnell.

Mr. JENNINGS: That is correct.

Mr. McLEAVE: I was going to ask the witness if he would not agree with me that on occasions the acting president of the C.B.C. is capable of using very colourful language.

Mr. JENNINGS: I have known him a great many years, and I think on the odd occasion.

Mr. FISHER: Mr. Jennings, you can refuse to answer this question if you wish to do so. Did you at any time consider resigning, yourself, over this issue?

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): I do not think this is a fair question.

The CHAIRMAN: You do not need to answer this question, Mr. Jennings, unless you wish to do so.

Mr. JENNINGS: I will not answer it then.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions, Mr. Fisher?

Mr. FISHER: No.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): Could we now call Mr. Bushnell?

The CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed?

Agreed.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bushnell, please. Gentlemen, this is Mr. Bushnell; I do not need to re-introduce him. Mr. Bushnell, have you a short statement you wish to read.

Mr. ERNEST BUSHNELL (*Acting President, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*): I have, Mr. Chairman. I want to say, as simply and directly as possible, that never at any time has an order or a directive been given to me, or to my president, Mr. Ouimet, by the Honourable Mr. George Nowlan or by any member of parliament, or by anyone else who could be said to wield political influence.

I have included Mr. Ouimet in this statement with his full knowledge and consent.

It has been alleged that the management of the corporation has taken into account the criticisms and differences of opinion that from time to time are expressed by members of parliament, either privately or publicly.

To close an ear completely to criticism, regardless of its source, would in my view clearly indicate irresponsibility on the part of management.



To give criticism from any source more weight than it appears to the corporation to deserve legitimately would again, in my view, be a clear indication of irresponsibility.

Now, so much for generalities. Why then did I choose to change this particular program Preview Commentary and substitute one format for another? Because it seemed to me that it had somehow changed from the original intention and was not doing as good a job. Having made up my mind, I moved quickly to substitute a factual news report of the Ottawa scene.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I am afraid I shall have to agree that my sense of timing—which is all-important in radio—was perhaps a little faulty. I have been a busy man for the last six months and, as you know, we have had a rapid sequence of shocks and strains lately, and here was one situation that I thought was in my power to correct immediately. I did my duty as I saw it, having regard to all the circumstances. This, Mr. Chairman, is the truth, and the simple explanation.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I would like to ask Mr. Bushnell—

The CHAIRMAN: I wonder, Mr. Pickersgill, whether you could stand, or speak louder—one or the other?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I would be very glad to stand. I would like to ask Mr. Bushnell whether the Prime Minister spoke to him about this program at any time, formally or informally?

Mr. BUSHNELL: No, sir, never. I have not spoken to the Prime Minister—had the honour of speaking to him in two years.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Might I ask Mr. Bushnell one other question? Did anyone purporting to speak on behalf of the Prime Minister speak to you about this program at any time?

The CHAIRMAN: What exactly do you mean by that, Mr. Pickersgill?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Anyone who represented himself as speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister?

The CHAIRMAN: Who could that be?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I prefer to ask my own questions, if the Chair will permit.

The CHAIRMAN: And I would prefer that you do not need to answer it, Mr. Bushnell, unless he gets down to cases—so we have an impasse on that. Would you like to change your question, Mr. Pickersgill?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: No, I will not change my question, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to answer it, Mr. Bushnell?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I think you will have to clarify for me what you mean by “purporting”.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I will be very happy to do that, and do it in the words I used the second time—anyone who represented himself to you as speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister?

Mr. BUSHNELL: No. Let me qualify that. As representing himself as speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Mr. BUSHNELL: No.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Did anyone representing himself as conveying views held by the Prime Minister speak to you about this program?

Mr. BUSHNELL: No, they did not.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: That is all the questions I have.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Pickersgill.



Mr. BRASSARD (*Lapointe*): I wonder if I heard Mr. Bushnell correctly when he said in the first sentence of this statement—when he used the word “order”? I wonder if I could ask him a question? Was he given any hint or any suggestion by a minister of the crown that this program should be dropped?

Mr. BUSHNELL: No, sir.

Mr. FISHER: Mr. Bushnell, the question I think we are all very interested in knowing is, how Mr. Jennings got the impression—which was passed on to Mr. Walker, which later got down to the three people that were called here today—that, in the slang phrase that Mr. Walker used, “heads will roll”?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Mr. Fisher, as Mr. Jennings said, he could not confirm that I actually used those terms. I did.

Mr. FISHER: You did use those terms?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Yes.

Mr. FISHER: Why?

Mr. BUSHNELL: This matter has a rather long association. No heads were going to roll because of the cancellation of this program, but I think you will agree that it has been stated by newspapers—I have heard it said that such a statement has been made, if you like, by members of political parties, and I felt convinced that with this rather tragic series of unfortunate circumstances that we have had in the last six months, that if we did not pull up our socks, certainly somebody’s head would roll—and quite properly.

Mr. FISHER: Mr. Bushnell, do you mean that the atmosphere was such at this particular stage when you made this decision that you felt your job and that of Mr. Ouimet were in jeopardy?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Rightly or wrongly, it could have been; and I think I felt that way.

Mr. FISHER: If your job was in jeopardy, where would the threat come from?

Mr. BUSHNELL: The threat, if you like, would—might have come from many different places.

Mr. FISHER: Did you ever at any time discuss this particular atmosphere, or situation, with Mr. Nowlan?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Yes.

Mr. FISHER: What advice did he give you?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I think you have used the right word, Mr. Fisher.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Fisher usually does.

Mr. BUSHNELL: In my position in the last six months—and prior to that, after the appointment of Mr. Ouimet and myself, we have had occasion to discuss matters with Mr. Nowlan, and—in my judgment—quite rightly.

Mr. Nowlan has intimated from time to time some of the things that he—how shall I put it?—that he felt were not being properly administered.

Mr. FISHER: You saw this question as, not one of principle but one of administration?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I do not—

Mr. FISHER: I mean, the question of Preview Commentary?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Yes.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): Mr. Chairman, may I ask Mr. Bushnell a supplementary question to this? You have stated, Mr. Bushnell, that you saw good reason—that you have indicated to the committee—for the removal of this particular program, Preview Commentary. May I, then, ask you whether



or not these threats—which you have also made some reference to, but had some difficulty to identify the source of these threats—whether they were actually real, or imaginary?

Otherwise, was there any suggestion on your part that this could be used as a pry to obtain the end which you desired in changing this program for the reasons you have indicated?

Mr. BUSHNELL: No; I came to the decision to substitute this commentary for another by myself, and no other.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): I understand that, Mr. Bushnell. The point I am making is: in convincing your colleagues that this should also be done, as a second portion—if I may use the expression—of your argument, was there any suggestion by you indicating that there had been these threats, that this was purely a selling feature for them, rather than factual?

Mr. BUSHNELL: It was reasonably factual.

Mr. MCINTOSH: Mr. Chairman, I have a supplementary question. Mr. Bushnell, you as acting manager of C.B.C.—did you consider any of the later Preview Commentary programs were not factual reports?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Yes.

Mr. MCINTOSH: When you started this series of programs was it your intention, or the intention of the board, that Preview Commentary would be factually reported?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I should say, sir, that all reports should not only be factual but objective.

Mr. MCINTOSH: Would you care to tell the committee, Mr. Bushnell, which showings—on what dates did you consider Preview Commentary was not reported factually?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I would not care to do so.

Mr. MCINTOSH: In your opinion, when did they start not to be factual?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I must admit that having had a rather busy time, this matter was not brought to my attention until some time, I should think, around the first of the year. And, then again, I felt we had quite responsible people who would be looking after this; and I should think it would be about a month ago that I began to ask for the scripts. It is my personal view—and I think it is only fair to add that a review of the scripts that were read by Mr. Jennings and by Mr. MacArthur, who was our former chief news editor, they found that some of the scripts, at least, were not what the C.B.C. might ordinarily expect them to be.

Mr. MCINTOSH: Mr. Bushnell, on your staff whose responsibility was it for seeing they were factual, before it came to you, as chairman?

Mr. BUSHNELL: You might have to go quite a long way back. I think the primary responsibility rests here in Ottawa. Then I am aware of the fact—

Mr. MCINTOSH: Who do you mean by “here in Ottawa”?

Mr. BUSHNELL: A producer of the talks and public affairs department.

Mr. MCINTOSH: But anyone who has appeared here as a witness today?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I would hesitate to correct what I thought Mr. Peers said. I was certainly under the impression that these scripts were sent back to Toronto. Now, it may not have been so. He may only have heard the broadcasts.

Mr. MCINTOSH: Who do you mean by “he”?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Mr. Peers. But I would have to have Mr. Peers confirm that himself. The responsibility goes from the producer in Ottawa to Mr.



Peers in Toronto, or to someone to whom he has delegated that responsibility. Then, as a matter of organization, the responsibility for policy of programming is that, ultimately, of Mr. Jennings, and Mr. Jennings reporting to management.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. McIntosh, you broke in on a supplementary question. I am trying to be fair, but we are not being fair to Mr. Fisher; and I will come back to you later. Mr. Fisher?

Mr. FISHER: I have to go into what Mr. McIntosh has elicited. What is your conception of a reporting job, if you conceive that as a factual report?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I think that a factual report should be one in which all sides of a particular situation should be brought out.

Mr. FISHER: Mr. Bushnell, we have a 3½ minute program, with parliament with a very busy day and very busy schedule. Would you agree there is a selection of fact and issues? Would you agree that a selection of facts and issues is forced upon anyone doing the job?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I would not disagree with that.

Mr. FISHER: So that, in effect, this straight, factual report covering parliament's day, in the circumstances, is almost impossible?

Mr. BUSHNELL: That is the way I felt about it personally.

Mr. FISHER: Is that your reason for dropping it, because it is impossible to have a factual report? If that is so, what was the original idea of having newspaper men at all?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Again, Mr. Fisher, I must tell you that when this program was started I assumed it would be factual, even in the short period of time that was given to it; and that it could, at least, in that brief period of time reflect one, two or three, or, indeed maybe more, of the highlights of what had happened in parliament the day before.

No other thinking—it could have been faulty, on reflection, and I am not casting any aspersions on the many fine correspondents we have in the press gallery—is this: here is someone who is given the job of reporting, in a very short time, it is true, and he has the job to go home at night, probably tired—and why he would not be I would not know—and think of what he is going to say in the morning, or punch it out on his typewriter that night. Then he has to go to the studio and be there at approximately 7:30 in the morning, at which time the producer is supposed to review the script with him. I do not think it is fair to ask people to do that. I felt that inasmuch as we were getting quite a volume of material through the normal press services, that a wider selection, without opinion, immediately following our news broadcast in the morning, would reflect, as far as the public is concerned—or “reflect” is not the word I want—would give the public of—not all of Canada, because this does not go everywhere, but in those areas in which it was broadcast, a better idea of what going on in parliament.

Mr. FISHER: Going back—

The CHAIRMAN: Might I suggest, Mr. Fisher, that this line of questioning is out of order. We are questioning management and why he made a decision. I cannot—

Mr. FISHER: Exactly.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot see this has anything to do with the motion. You know what the motion was, and there is no use reading it again. We have the evidence from Mr. Bushnell an that motion. Are there any other questions on the motion?



Mr. FISHER: Yes. Why did not Mr. Bushnell consult with Mr. Peers on this thing? You have a diverging explanation. Why did you not consult with Mr. Peers on it, or with Mr. Jennings?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Mr. Fisher, maybe I should have. I was not trying to avoid Mr. Peers when he was down here. I saw Mr. Peers standing outside Parliament; and Mr. Jennings, I think, made one slight error in dates. He can correct me if I am wrong, but I think I saw Mr. Peers at this parliamentary committee on Tuesday. It could have been Thursday—no, certainly it was not Thursday because I was sick.

Mr. FISHER: You gave Mr. Jennings, and so Mr. Walker, the impression that the two jobs were in jeopardy, is that correct?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Unfortunately, they took it that way.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. McIntosh, you have question on the motion?

Mr. MCINTOSH: Yes, I have some questions, to follow on the line I used before. Mr. Bushnell, you said that back as far as January 1 you stated that you became aware that preview commentary was not factual, and the thought was going through your mind at that time you would change it or cancel it. Did you intimate to Mr. Peers either by letter or by word of mouth what your thoughts were on this matter?

Mr. BUSHNELL: No.

Mr. MCINTOSH: Prior to what date?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Prior to the date, I think, when Mr. Jennings sent him a teletype.

Mr. MCINTOSH: Was there any other way by which he would know what your thoughts were on this program?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Not that I am aware of.

Mr. MCINTOSH: Did any of the other directors know of your thoughts about the program prior to that time?

Mr. BUSHNELL: By directors, do you mean the directors of my board?

Mr. MCINTOSH: Yes.

Mr. BUSHNELL: I do not know that they knew of my thoughts; but I think it is only fair to say that the board had drawn to my attention on more than one occasion the whole question of factual, objective, and responsible commentaries. The board, as you know, comes from many sections of this country, and they are a new board.

The CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, but again I cannot see where this has anything to do with the motion whatsoever.

Did you have any question on the motion, Mr. McIntosh or Mr. Taylor?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I have been trying to catch your eye a dozen times.

The CHAIRMAN: Oh, I did not see it. I am sorry.

Mr. TAYLOR: Mr. Bushnell says there was no political interference. His associates felt, or were led to believe, that there was. Apparently there was a very short discussion with Mr. Jennings about dropping the program, and giving reasons for dropping the program, and there were probably rumors of resistance, or statements made that there was political interference. Would it not have been wise at that time to scotch those rumors with your associates by calling them together?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR: Would it not have been wise to call them in and to put an end to it by selling them on it?



Mr. BUSHNELL: Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR: And as a second point, it would appear that they were chasing management to get a conference, but they could not seem to accomplish it.

Mr. BUSHNELL: I have admitted my guilt.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes, and I think very fairly.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: My question is this: was the decision which he said he made because he thought the program was bad, or because he felt that the program was displeasing to the government?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I made the decision because I felt that the program in itself was not as good as it should be, and I have reason to believe that it was displeasing a great many people; and reports that came back to me through my board and through my association with certain businessmen—if you like—and certain others, such as school-teachers indicated to me clearly that this program was not achieving what I thought it had been created to achieve.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I have a second question. Mr. Bushnell agreed with Mr. Fisher that he had used the right word when he used the word "advice" about the discussion between Mr. Nowlan and Mr. Bushnell. I therefore use that word. Did you at any time receive any advice from Mr. Nowlan that this program was displeasing to the government or to anyone in the government?

Mr. BUSHNELL: You ask if I received any advice from him?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Mr. BUSHNELL: No.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Was there any suggestion from him, or did he convey in any way to you the notion of the feeling that this program was displeasing to the government or to anyone in the government.

Mr. BUSHNELL: He conveyed to me the impression that several programs had displeased a great many people in the government and elsewhere.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I have one final question. This is a question which, if Mr. Bushnell does not want to answer it, I shall not press.

The CHAIRMAN: Very well.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: How did you think that Mr. Jennings got the impression that Mr. Nowlan's head might roll?

The CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to answer that question?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I would prefer not to.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: All right.

Mr. SMITH (*Calgary South*): We have an opportunity of course to sit again later on. On the other hand we have the pending arrival of Her Majesty the Queen so I suggest that you give us an indication of the time of adjournment.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we are practically through with Mr. Bushnell.

Mr. BRASSARD: I would like to ask one more question. Mr. Bushnell has just told Mr. Pickersgill that in the discussion between himself and Mr. Nowlan that the latter conveyed to him the impression that many programs were displeasing to a great many people. I wonder if that precise program, Preview Commentary, had been mentioned during that discussion?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I could not truthfully answer that.

Mr. FISHER: Mr. Walker reported on a telephone conversation that went from the Celebrity Club in which you spoke to Mr. Ouimet. Is it true that in that telephone conversation as reported in substance by Mr. Walker, that



you told Mr. Ouimet that if the program did not go, your job and his job were in jeopardy?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Inasmuch as there were two witnesses there, Mr. Jennings and Mr. Walker, I do not think I could categorically deny that. But what I did say, or what I was trying to get at was this: that if, generally speaking, something was not done to correct some of the errors of our ways, that that could be a possibility.

Mr. FISHER: What errors of your ways?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I think you have probably heard enough of them.

Mr. FISHER: Go ahead.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): This particular conversation took place after there had been some thirty resignations; did it not?

Mr. BUSHNELL: Yes; I think that is true. My memory on dates is not too clear. However, it was on the day that the committee met in Toronto.

Mr. FISHER: Mr. Chairman, the motion by which we brought these three men before the committee was that they were invited to present evidence on the charge of clandestine political influence. Can you now understand why they made that charge?

Mr. BUSHNELL: No; I cannot, Mr. Fisher. I think probably we might as well have a definition of "clandestine":

. . . conducted with secrecy by design usually for an evil purpose.

The CHAIRMAN: Or illicit.

Mr. BUSHNELL: That I have never done.

Mr. FISHER: Would you agree, Mr. Bushnell, that these three persons by their resignations put themselves in a very serious position?

The CHAIRMAN: Do you want his opinion on this?

Mr. FISHER: Yes.

Mr. BUSHNELL: Well, for what my opinion is worth, I think in the light of events, maybe they felt that that was the only course of action open to them.

Mr. FISHER: In the evidence we have had from Mr. Walker and Mr. Jennings the indications are that they relayed to these persons the idea that there was political influence brought to bear. Do you agree that they could have taken that quite honestly from what was relayed to them?

Mr. BUSHNELL: They might have.

Mr. TAYLOR: When you first heard from your employees that they were under the impression there was political interference did you try to communicate to them what the real circumstances were?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I am sorry.

The CHAIRMAN: You will have to repeat it. Would you stand up so that we can hear you.

Mr. TAYLOR: When you first heard that your associates were under the belief there was political interference, did you then make an effort to take them into your confidence in order to explain the true situation?

The CHAIRMAN: I think he has already answered that. He admitted he did not.

Mr. FLYNN: Mr. Bushnell, could the threats you referred to be the views expressed generally that the C.B.C. was not as objective as it should be and the views expressed strongly in the press, parliament and this committee, and elsewhere; is that it? The general desire that the C.B.C. should be more objective.



Mr. BUSHNELL: Yes.

Mr. FLYNN: And it is in this view that you wanted to change this program.

Mr. BUSHNELL: Yes.

Mr. FLYNN: Do you not think there was a reaction within the C.B.C. personnel against any change of policy?

Mr. BUSHNELL: I think that is obvious. Mr. Chairman, with your permission I want to put one short sentence on the record. So long as I hold my present position I shall continue to uphold and apply the principles of free speech and responsible reporting of public issues.

The CHAIRMAN: Do I hear a motion to adjourn?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Before there is a motion to adjourn, I would like to understand whether or not these hearings are over?

The CHAIRMAN: I would suggest that the hearings with these witnesses are over and that on Thursday morning we reconvene at 9.30 in our regular room 112N, at which time we will go back to our agenda with the C.B.C.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I would like to record my formal dissent from that decision.

The CHAIRMAN: Did I hear a motion. Mr. Chambers.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: A motion to adjourn is not debatable.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Who made the motion?

The CHAIRMAN: I said Mr. Chambers made the motion and Mr. McGrath seconded it.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Then I will comply with it.

Mr. FISHER: In what position are we leaving these three men?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Exactly.

—The committee adjourned.











